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[1] Financial Times, July 19 2009, Title: How to End America's Deadly Coal Addiction by: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

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Witness Protection Program

Writing in *National Review* two and a half years ago, John J. Miller noted the plight of Pipe Creek Farm in Westminster, Maryland. Pipe Creek was the home of Whittaker Chambers. The farm loomed large in his storied memoir *Witness*, both as an element in Chambers's private life and as part of the intrigue that bound Chambers to Alger Hiss, the Soviet spy who was convicted of perjury in 1950 thanks to Chambers's testimony. It was at his farm that Chambers hid the so-called Pumpkin Papers—microfiche proof of Hiss's espionage, secreted in a carved out pumpkin.

Chambers lived at Pipe Creek until his death in 1961; his wife, Esther, stayed there until she passed away in 1986; and his son, John Chambers, who is now in his early 70s, lives there today.

The only problem is that, as Miller reported beginning in 2007, Carroll County wants to take a 15-acre portion of the farm and flood it as part of the planned Union Mills Reservoir. This project isn't new—it dates back to the 1960s. In 1988, President Reagan's Department of the Interior designated Pipe Creek Farm as a National Historic Landmark, but apparently, such distinctions mean little to county officials. After years of threatening to invoke eminent domain to seize the 15 acres, the county finally seems to be moving ahead with its plan.

Whittaker Chambers at Pipe Creek

This isn't eminent domain abuse, per se—the reservoir is clearly a long-standing public project and the county seems to be acting in good faith. But still. It's a pity that, in addition to being an important marker in the 20th-century battle between freedom and Communist totalitarianism, Chambers's farm wasn't also home to some obscure species of stag beetle. Then it might have been left intact.

In any event, the eminent domain threat to Pipe Creek isn't the worst of it. A few weeks ago, Miller reported that one of the buildings on the farm—the house where Chambers wrote *Witness*—burned down. The saddest part may be that in reporting the event, the local paper didn't even mention the building's notable past. ♦

Lost in Translation

When it was reported that Detroit airline bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab had been a student activist at University College London, the distinguished historian of Irish terrorism Ruth Dudley Edwards published an important piece in the *Telegraph*, "British universities: seats of learning—and loathing." Abdulmutallab's parents, she wrote, must wonder

> what happened to the college's duty of care towards their son. Did no tutor talk to him about his life outside engineering? Did it concern no one that this lonely boy had taken to wearing Islamic dress? Wasn't anyone worried about the radicalism of the "War on Terror Week" Abdulmutallab organised as president [of the Islamic Society]? Did anyone know he had asked a "hate-preacher" to address the society? Or did UCL think their job was simply to teach the boy engineering in exchange for his father's large cheques?

British universities are in denial, she wrote, about the "increasing support for Islamism on campuses."

> And all this denial has continued, despite a steady stream of evidence about the university background of notorious jihadists like Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the murderer of Daniel Pearl (London School of Economics), the London bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan (Leeds Metropolitan), Kafeel Ahmed (Cambridge), who blew himself up at Glasgow Airport, and Omar Rehman (Westminster) now serving 15 years for conspiracy to blow up several UK and US targets. There are close to 100,000 Muslim students in the UK, and extremists are swimming among them. . . . The truth is that a mixture of greed, knee-jerk Left-wingery, anti-Semitism and pusillanimity have combined to make our universities breeding grounds for Islamism.

The Scrapbook was reminded of this article by the news last week that Danny Ayalon, the deputy foreign minister of Israel, was greeted during his address to the Oxford Union by a student shouting "kill the Jews" ("*Itbah al-yahud*," in Arabic).

That student "clarified" his remarks the following day. As reported by Jessica Elgot of the *Jewish Chronicle*, second-year St Edmund's Hall student Noor Rashid

> claimed that he had in fact shouted "*Khaybar ya Yahod*," a classic Arabic battle cry referring to a seventh-century attack by Mohammed on the Jewish community in Khaybar

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where the Jews were conquered and made to pay half of their income to the Muslim population. . . . Mr Rashid said: "My version went: 'Khaybar, O Jews, we will win'. This is in classical, Koranic Arabic and I doubt that apart from picking up on the word 'Jew,' that even the Arabic speakers in the room would have understood the phrase. As you can see, I made no reference to killing Jews. It carries absolutely no derogatory or secondary meanings." Mr Rashid said he believed the words "Jew" and "Israeli" were interchangeable terms. . . . "I express the deepest regret if my remarks were misunderstood or misheard to mean anything that even comes close to encouraging the slaughter of innocents."

"Innocents," as those versed in extremist rhetoric well know, is a weasel word—one that doesn't apply to the Jews of Israel since they are "occupiers." Shorter version: Rashid perhaps didn't mean "kill the Jews"—he just meant "slaughter the Israelis." Charming.

Noor Rashid, by the way, is not just any Oxford student. As the blog Harry's Place discovered with a Google search, he may not be the president of his university's Islamic Society, as Abdulmutallab was, but he is the Society's representative for St Edmund's Hall.

The Community Security Trust, which monitors anti-Semitism in Britain, reacted to Rashid's clarification as follows: "The police should still continue with their investigation. It is about time incitement was treated as such. We are very quick to charge neo-Nazis with incitement, which is right of course, but there appears to be an increasing distinct double standard."

Indeed. As Edwards noted in her *Telegraph* piece, "fearful of being accused of racism and cultural insensitivity, the academic establishment is running scared of Islamic bullyboys. Supporters of the BNP [the far-right British National Party] would be run off campuses where there are no rebukes for proponents of Islamic fascism and murder." ♦

Palin Derangement Syndrome

The depths of the left's hatred of Sarah Palin are still being plumbed. As The Scrapbook's colleague Mary Katharine Ham reported last week on The Weekly Standard Blog, Palin wears an engraved metal bracelet bearing the name of her son, who is deployed to Iraq, "and boy, is the left angry about it. No, really."

Continued Ham: "The bracelet got a bit of attention thanks to the other Sarah Palin nonscandal of the week. When the former governor of Alaska gave a speech at the tea party convention Saturday, she did it with notes scribbled on her palm, giving the supporters of President TelePrompTer apoplexy and causing them to produce copious close-ups of Sarah Palin's left hand.

"It was in one of those close-ups that Eric Robinson, writing in the *Yale Daily News*, stumbled on Palin's alleged big blunder. Robinson, an Afghanistan and Iraq vet, pegged Palin's bracelet as a black, memorial bracelet, reserved for soldiers killed in action":

> What has me troubled is a black bracelet firmly clasped around her left wrist. I hadn't noticed it until I watched MSNBC's "Hardball" on Tuesday, but it is a memorial bracelet; something familiar to veterans who have lost friends and family in the

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wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I wear one commemorating a friend of mine who died in Baghdad in October of 2006, and I know many other veterans—and some still in the armed forces—who wear these bracelets as a reminder of the sacrifices their friends made on behalf of the units in which they served and the country they swore to protect.

As Ham then detailed, the liberal blogosphere went nuts over the allegation. But they were nuts to go nuts. It wasn't a memorial bracelet. The owner of HeroBracelets.org wrote a post on his site explaining that Palin was wearing a "Deployment Bracelet" that he gave her, which is bronze, not black. Ham noted the most bizarre aspect of this episode: "If you're going to take Palin on, there is perhaps no ground less advantageous than the service of her son and her genuine love for him." ♦

The Book You've Been Waiting for

It's not very often that a book comes along that's a hit with flyfishing, *Star Wars*, and Marion Barry enthusiasts alike. So it is with an appreciation for his Lady Gaga-like genre transcendence that we celebrate the release of a new book by The Weekly Standard's very own Matt Labash, *Fly Fishing with Darth Vader: and Other Adventures with Evangelical Wrestlers, Political Hitmen, and Jewish Cowboys* (Matt's never been one for brevity).

An added treat to a Labash book release is that he emerges from behind the vaguely desk-shaped pile of old newspapers, magazines, and scrap printer paper in his office to do press interviews. Here's Labash's summary of the book's contents from a Q&A with *Esquire*:

> My favorite story in *Fly Fishing with Darth Vader*, you ask? Why not just ask me to pick a favorite child? I can't really do that. Each of them means something different, each experience left me with indelible memories. The stories in this collection saw me beaning elementary schoolgirls in the face with a dodgeball, plotting dirty tricks with Roger Stone, slogging through forced funtivities in corporate America, and trying to bribe my way into Iraq with Christopher Hitchens. Marion Barry showed me his nipples. Jim Traficant gave me a goombah smack in the face, while explaining that Janet Reno is a lesbian mob puppet. The hillbilly Democratic bubba-hunter, Mudcat Saunders, nearly killed me on an outlaw racetrack and tried to feed me a handful of deer turds. The crooked former governor of Louisiana, Edwin Edwards, drove me around Baton Rouge against a judge's order, risking imprisonment, where he was headed anyway. And that's just for starters. Even the subjects I had a more tempestuous relationship with, I ended up liking. Donald Trump comes to mind. When he was considering a Reform party presidential run, I shadowed him all over California, ate pizza with Trump and Melania in his private jet, and watched him tell a rabbi at the Holocaust Museum that he had a "nice property," which I thought was pure class.

The early reviews are enthusiastic. Jeffrey Goldberg of the *Atlantic* called Labash's collection of journalistic hijinks the "funniest book of the year" (while taking pains to note he doesn't know Labash, personally).

And Mark Lasswell of the *Wall Street Journal* says, "Mr. Labash inhabits a story so thoroughly that readers feel as if they're at his side, seeing events with his sharp eye, privy to his wisecracks, savoring moments when he reels in what feels like the truth. Sure, executing long-form journalism at this high level has about it a whiff of the Civil War reenactment—an almost perfect evocation of a bygone era!—but there is also a certain thrilling defiance displayed by . . . the writer [as he] plows ahead, page after page."

None of this will come as news, of course, to longtime readers of these pages. So feed your Labash habit; go buy *Fly Fishing with Darth Vader.* ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'From time to time I come across Silda and Eliot Spitzer. He is the . . . " (Richard Cohen, *Washington Post*, February 9). ♦

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The Snows of Yesteryear

I never watch a snowstorm without a feeling of gratitude that I got to live, as a teenager north of Boston, through the Blizzard of 1978. Since Washington is having its snowiest winter in a century, I have been having these feelings a lot. It is not the storm itself that sticks in the memory three decades later, although that was amazing enough. For a while, snow was falling at four inches an hour, and the winds were close to hurricane force. Had the storm lasted an hour you would have said, "Wow, that was terrifying" at the end of it. But the storm's exit from New England was blocked by a big Canadian high-pressure area, so it kept spinning over Boston and Providence for 36 hours. It coincided with a new moon and an unusually high tide, so along the coast, houses and seawalls and even roads were shattered by flying water and flung rocks.

The storm was unexpected. People left for work with cocktail party invitations and movie plans and didn't make it home for days. Traffic halted on the highways and snow quickly drifted over the cars, which people sensibly abandoned. So the roads along the coast were filled with rocks and the roads inland were mined with buried cars. Plowing was impossible in much of the state. So the governor, Michael Dukakis, banned driving, except for essential deliveries and road work.

That was the glorious thing about the Blizzard of '78: the liberation, which lasted about a week, from the automobile. There was a lot of discontent in those days about "the system"—America was conformist, consumerist, mass-oriented, anti-individualistic. That many of the people who said so were political opportunists and folk-singing, dope-smoking pseudo-intellectuals should not blind us to the fact that they were right.

A 15-year-old feels the shackles on him particularly painfully. That is why so many New Englanders of my age—provided they didn't have friends or relatives killed—remember the blizzard as a liberation, a deus ex machina. It was a sort of meteorological equivalent of the Commune of Paris or the Six-Day War. We were all in the uncomfortable anteroom of adulthood, in the sense that adulthood—under the idiotic values by which our country then lived, and lives still—was conferred by a driver's license. Now, suddenly, cars were worthless.

DAVID GOTHARD

What was valuable? First, the snow-shoveling brawn that teenagers had and which could be converted into cash. Second, the endurance to walk to the store with a sled to fetch groceries for the whole neighborhood, which could be converted into social standing. Even New England, although more pedestrian-friendly than the rest of the country, had by then been grotesquely misbuilt to serve the needs of the automobile. For a lot of people, even in crowded parts of town, the closest grocery store was a mile or two away.

As we became more equal, we became more free. It turned out that parents' fears for their teenage children were of three kinds: accidents, exposure to drugs in some of the nastier towns nearby, and pregnancy. Without cars, the first two were impossible, and the third was (in this kind of snow) impracticable. So the adults left the kids to wander about the town, on what would ordinarily have been school nights.

There was a woman who ran a ballet studio in a rented building downtown, where she taught half a dozen girls in my class after school. Her son was in my class, too. She now opened the premises every night for dances. It was like living in a Jane Austen novel. Here was a woman whose talents and generosity became apparent once the busy-ness of life abated. I had never heard of her. Suddenly I revered her.

Without automobiles, we loved each other more. Even in the first days after the snow began to melt and cars began to move in a limited way, what a spirit of community there was! Anyone who hitchhiked anywhere in town was picked up by the first car that passed. My friends began to ask: Do we need all these cars? Wouldn't two or three on a street do? A better way of life was opening up for us. Except that it wasn't, of course. By a month or two after the state of emergency had been lifted, it was as if the Blizzard had never happened. People went back to their honking, selfish, soulless, conformist ways.

We loved the world the Blizzard created, but we learned nothing from it, and thinking of that has often reminded me of Coventry Patmore's great poem "The Revelation":

Love wakes men, once a lifetime each;
They lift their heavy lids, and look;
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach,
They read with joy, then shut the book.

I liked that poem as a young man because it seemed to insist on gathering one's rosebuds. I like it now because it sees how robust people's preconceptions and habits are, how resistant to argument and experience. That is one of life's great disappointments and one of its great consolations.

Christopher Caldwell

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Feeling Lucky?

Yankees pitcher Lefty Gomez was a 20-game winner four times in the 1930s. He led the league twice in wins, winning percentage, and ERA, and three times in shutouts and strikeouts. He was an awfully good pitcher. But he always said, "I'd rather be lucky than good." It's best to be both. But if the Obama administration continues to resist being good at national security policy, we need to hope they—and we—remain lucky.

Despite a systemic counterterrorism failure, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab failed to detonate his bomb. That was lucky.

Despite a perverse attempt to side with our enemies in Honduras, the Honduran people ignored us and ended up with a decent and democratic—and friendly—government. That was lucky.

Despite a foolish overhyping of the possibilities of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, and an unseemly inclination to badger our close ally, nothing too damaging has happened on the ground in the region. That was lucky.

One could go on. And one could even argue that Scott Brown's victory in Massachusetts was an insistence of Obama luck. By killing health care (assuming it did), it may have averted a massive outpouring of voter anger that Democrats would have faced in November as a result of having forced health care down our throats. Now the issue may recede sufficiently, and if the economy comes back in the short term—partly thanks to the death of Obama's health care and cap and trade proposals—Democrats may only have a bad, rather than awful, election year. And that would be lucky.

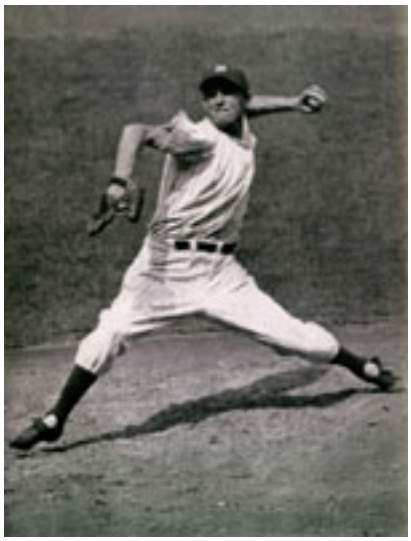
But the real stroke of luck would be regime change in Iran. It's the only alternative to either a jihadist regime with nuclear weapons, or war. The administration has been pathetically timid with respect to Iran. It can't bring itself to do the smallest things to support the Iranian dissidents. But the Green revolution could still prevail.

It sometimes works this way: the hard and controversial work of a prior administration—Ronald Reagan's in taking on the Soviet Union, George W. Bush's in beginning the task of changing the Middle East—isn't reversed by its successor. The effort still has momentum. And the big change then happens on the successor's watch.

So if Obama doesn't throw away our achievements in Iraq, if he perseveres in Afghanistan, if he doesn't entirely turn his back on the freedom doctrine for the Middle East—then the Iranian people have a chance to prevail, even without a champion in the White House.

But it would be easier if they had a champion.

Some in Congress are stepping up. The death last week of Charlie Wilson is a reminder of the difference that members of Congress can make. Most accounts of how the Soviet Union was brought down tend to emphasize the Reagan defense buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative, the deployment of the Pershings, Reagan's moral and political support for dissidents, and his rhetorical assault on the evil empire. These were important. But one shouldn't forget our aid to those fighting against the Soviet army in Afghanistan—and the impact in the Soviet Union of the forced withdrawal. That aid began in the Carter presidency and was spearheaded by Charlie Wilson.



Lefty Gomez in 1930

GETTY IMAGES

It's not clear Congress could do anything so dramatic for the Iranian protestors. But the legislation introduced last week by Senators John Cornyn and Sam Brownback at least pushes in the right direction. "The Iran Democratic Transition Act" would support—rhetorically and financially—efforts by Iranian opposition groups to remove the regime in Tehran and pave the way for a free and democratic government in Iran.

President Obama said early last week that he had "bent over backwards" to engage Iran. So he has. We're lucky we haven't paid a heavier price for this foolish policy. One that seems to have been driven by an odd combination of vanity and weakness. It would be good if the president now stood up straight and put the American government unambiguously and energetically on the side of the Iranians demonstrating against a dictatorship.

With all due respect to Lefty Gomez, and to the admittedly large role of fortune in human affairs—it's nice to be lucky, but it's safer to be strong.

—William Kristol

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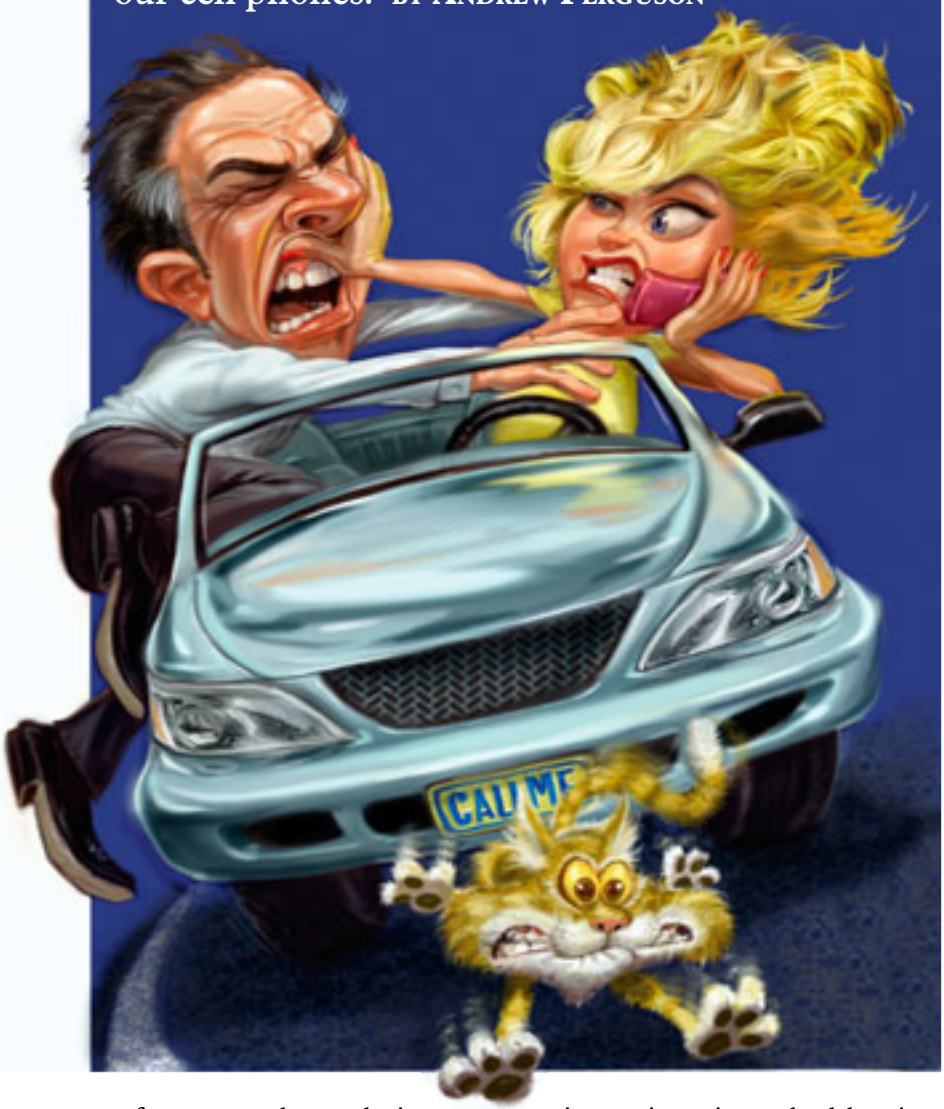
Driving While Distracted

Ray LaHood, government guy, targets our cell phones. BY ANDREW FERGUSON



GARY LOCKE

If you want to know why it may soon be illegal for you to use your cell phone when you drive your car, you have to remember that Ray LaHood, the secretary of transportation, is a government guy. It's all he knows.

As a young man LaHood taught for six years in a private school, but since then it's been government all the way—a few years as a planner for the state planning commission, a term in the Illinois legislature, nearly 20 years as a congressional aide, and 14 years in the big time, as a Republican congressman, piping federal grants into a derelict district in central Illinois. Though he's driven many automobiles and ridden in countless airplanes, he has no particular expertise in the nation's transportation systems, and some kibitzers wondered aloud why President Obama appointed him secretary. But the kibitzers miss the point: As a government guy LaHood doesn't need any expertise beyond being a government guy.

This is where you and your cell phone come in. Over the last several months LaHood has mobilized his vast and lavishly funded ($70 billion) department behind a high-minded goal: "to put an end to distracted driving." Those are his words—not *curtail*, not *discourage*, not even *reduce by 50 percent*. No: *Put an end to*. In its ambition and method, LaHood's initiative is a kind of textbook example of how government guys create work for themselves, manage to keep themselves busy, and put the rest of us on our guard.

The government guy's first step, always, is to raid the language of epidemiology and declare a problem—any problem, from anorexia to obesity—an "epidemic." And so: "Distracted driving is a serious, life-threatening epidemic," LaHood said at one of his big events last month. (By definition, of course, epidemics are serious and life-threatening, but since distracted driving isn't really an epidemic, the adjectives are needed to juice it up.)

Even imaginary epidemics need victims. The next step is for the government guy to identify dead people whose relatives are willing, for unknown reasons, to let him publicly exploit their unutterable grief for his own purposes. To advance his distracted driving campaign LaHood keeps several of these abject relatives handy, so his publicists can position them just behind him and slightly to the right, where the cameras catch them gazing at him with liquid, upcast eyes. The relatives are particularly useful if some cynic or pantywaist naysayer questions the urgency or logic of a government initiative. When his use of statistics was called into question a few weeks ago, LaHood fired back on his website. "Ask Shelli Ralls," he said, "who lost her son Chance Wayne Wilcox on March 22, 2008" in a "crash caused by a cell phone driver." Here he inserted a tasteful picture of Wilcox's crash site. And then he invoked the

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deity. "Ask any one of the hundreds of people who have poured out their stories of loss on Oprah." Nothing shuts up a cynic like a grieving mother.

Epidemic isn't the only essential term for a government guy. Certain phrases act as a kind of dog whistle for bureaucrats, activists, and sympathetic reporters, to let them know an important initiative is afoot. In seeking to end distracted driving in the United States, LaHood has used them all. He has issued a "call to action," vowed to "raise awareness," invoked a "national network" of "stakeholders" pursuing "best practices," insisted that "the American people" "demand action" and "commonsense solutions."

The most valuable term for LaHood is "distracted driving." It is an expansive phrase that a deft government guy can play like an accordion, stretching or squeezing it as his argument demands. The immediate upshot of LaHood's initiative, he said last month, is that he wants laws that will make it illegal for drivers to use handheld cell phones behind the wheel. State laws, local laws, federal laws, whichever, it seems not to matter to him—just so long as this little slice of unregulated human behavior is prohibited and punished. Already seven states and the District of Columbia have outlawed the use of handheld cell phones by drivers, and dozens more are entertaining similar legislation. LaHood urges Congress to push all states to pass cell phone laws or, if the states fail him, to pass a law of its own.

It's a big step, telling people that they can't hold a cell phone in their car, but the fuzzy phrase "distracted driving" makes it look smaller, more reasonable, and much less intrusive than it is. Department of Transportation literature defines distracted driving as "any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing." Elsewhere the department offers a partial list of those dangerous nondriving activities in addition to holding a cell phone: "eating, drinking, conversing with passengers, interaction with in-vehicle technologies [I think this means changing the radio station], daydreaming, or dealing with strong emotions," along with other activities unspecified.

Quite a list! But LaHood doesn't mention it when he appears at events designed to "raise awareness" about the dangers of handheld cell phone use. At a typical event last month he announced that "nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver," with the implication that a cell phone driving ban would halt the butchery—I mean epidemic.

The real-world situation, you won't be surprised to learn, is more complicated. The precise number of these fatalities in 2008 was 5,870. According to the official tables, they occurred in "police-reported crashes in which at least one form of distracted driving was reported on the crash report." The fatality statistic doesn't tell us anything about cell phone use because it doesn't mention cell phone use. It doesn't even tell us whether "distracted driving," in any of its dozen or more manifestations, was the cause of the fatal crash. An Alzheimer's sufferer who got hit by a dump truck while driving through an oil slick and taking blows from his angry wife with the family dog perched on his shoulder sticking its disgusting tongue in his ear would become, in LaHood's statistical accounting, another piece of evidence for a ban on cell phone driving.

So what do we know about the safety of using cell phones in cars? Aside from the intuitive understanding that we all share—that anyone who can't wait till he's done driving to talk on his cell phone is a jackass—we don't know a lot for certain. The number of fatal crashes "involving distraction" has increased in the last four years; but the overall number of such crashes has declined. Nationwide, car crashes have fallen dramatically while the use of cell phones has jumped dramatically (from 195 billion minutes in June 2000 to 1.1 trillion in June 2008). Last month the Highway Loss Data Institute issued a report comparing collision rates for states before and after they passed bans on drivers using handheld cell phones. The bans showed no effect on the number, frequency, or severity of collisions.

LaHood's reaction to this latest report showed why he's the government guy. It should have been a devastating blow; the institute's evidence severely undercuts the logic of his initiative. Instead he took to his blog—yes, even Ray LaHood has a blog—and summarily declared that the new study provided still more evidence that government action was urgently needed.

"The surprising data," he wrote, "encourages people to wrongly conclude that talking on cell phones while driving is not dangerous! Nothing could be further from the truth. Just ask Jennifer Smith . . . " Smith, of course, is another grieving mother. He went on to equate cell phone driving with drunk driving. "If anything, the study suggests we need even tougher protections."

How so? LaHood had an explanation for why the state bans had not reduced collisions. In states that banned handheld cell phone use, he said, drivers probably began using hands-free cell phones. And "research tells us hands-free is just as dangerous as handheld."

Thus the call to action escalates, and the needed prohibitions grow more comprehensive. A ban on handheld cell phone use will be insufficient if we are to cure the epidemic. Only a total ban on drivers' use of cell phones, handheld and hands-free, will bring progress.

LaHood didn't go further, at least for the moment. He might have mentioned that "research" also tells us that talking on a cell phone, hands free or handheld, is just as "dangerous" as having a spirited conversation with a passenger, which can be just as dangerous as drunk driving . . . and so on through the official list of distractions: eating, drinking, daydreaming. . .

We are, in other words, going to need a very big ban, and Ray LaHood is just the guy to give it to us. "Studies of cognitive distraction," he wrote on his blog, "tell us that it's not about where your hands are, but where your head is." It is a dream almost too big even for the most ambitious government guy: a National Initiative for Head Relocation. ♦

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Comprehensive Failure

Obama needs to think small.

BY JEFFREY H. ANDERSON

In yet another interview in connection with a major sporting event—this time, the Super Bowl—President Obama proposed yet another unorthodox manner of addressing a political problem: this time, a bipartisan half-day health care summit on live TV. Why hold such a meeting nearly a year into the health care debate? "Well," he told Katie Couric, "I think that what I want to do is to look at the Republican ideas that are out there."

This would seem to be a good, if grossly overdue, idea. Unfortunately, the prospects for a real back-and-forth exchange look bleak. Couric asked Obama if he'd be willing "to start at square one," and he took pains not to answer. Subsequently, White House aides made it clear that the president would be bringing his own health care bill to the table. Then, the day after the president's interview, his secretary of health and human services, Kathleen Sebelius, stated that the president's proposal wasn't really conducive to being accepted in part or rejected in part. Sebelius said, "I think the president remains committed to the notion that we *have* to have a comprehensive approach, because the pieces of the puzzle are too closely tied to one another." She added, "Pieces of the puzzle are *necessarily* tied together if you have a comprehensive approach."

So if the president already has his own comprehensive bill in hand, and its interlocking pieces are not really subject to refinement, revision, or removal, one wonders exactly what Republicans' role at the summit *is*. Is it to convince President Obama that they have a better plan, which he should therefore substitute in its entirety for his own? Sebelius offered another possibility, noting that the president is willing to "add various elements" to his bill. In other words, while his bill cannot be redesigned or made smaller, it can be made bigger—provided that the Republicans have what he thinks are good ideas to add.

Our democratic process, our separation of powers, and our federalist design frustrate Obama. But they are not 'unfortunate.'

This bizarre combination of claims is revelatory of the president's outlook on politics. "Incremental gains" is a phrase foreign to his vocabulary, as is the notion of having Washington solve problems by getting out of the way and unleashing the initiative of individuals or communities. Rather, problems must be solved all at once, comprehensively, nationwide, from the top, by the federal government. This approach is largely divorced from practical considerations or, as Sebelius notes, from compromise. It is the approach of the theoretician, not the practitioner; of the academic, not the statesman; of one who prefers to decree or to gain acquiescence, rather than to negotiate or to persuade.

Obama is far more comfortable with such roles. In a moment of candor, he essentially said as much to Couric:

> Look, I would have loved nothing better than to simply come up with some very elegant, you know, academically approved approach to health care, [that] didn't have any kinds of legislative fingerprints on it, and just go ahead and have that passed. But that's not how it works in our democracy. Unfortunately what we end up having to do is to do a lot of negotiations with a lot of different people.

With the possible exception of Woodrow Wilson, can you imagine any of our prior presidents having said that?

Our democratic process, our separation of powers, and our federalist design frustrate Obama. But, far from being unfortunate, the negotiations and multiple levels of approval that they require, from a myriad of different citizens, is largely what secures our liberty—protecting it from those who would otherwise impose their own comprehensive goals from their lofty theoretical perches. The Founders were surely not Obama's intellectual inferiors, but they were practical men. The Constitutional Convention was nothing if not high-level give-and-take, tinkering and refining. One imagines Obama showing up at Independence Hall with his own plan in hand (probably adapted from Rousseau's in *The Social Contract*, with Obama cast in the role of the Legislator) and being surprised when the other delegates resisted his eloquence and, correspondingly, his proposal.

The academic mindset—which is not necessarily synonymous with intellectual inquisitiveness—is also conducive to a disconnect from the real world in other ways. Take the following exchange:

> COURIC: A lot of people, including Democrats, wrote to me saying you campaigned on the slogan "Change you can believe in." But their lives and the ways of Washington, they wrote, haven't changed at all. What would you say to them?

Amazingly, Obama replied:

> Well, it's not true that they haven't changed at all. Let's just take—we're sitting in the White House here. Every single person who comes into the White House now is posted on a website, so you know every visitor to the White House. That's never happened in the history of the Republic.

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Seriously? To be fair, he went on from there, but that was his first response. The "change we can believe in" is that the names of White House visitors are now listed online.

The comprehensive approach to problem-solving is at best ineffective and at worst dangerous. When was the last time you heard President Obama talk about local or state solutions? When was the last time you heard him talk about the federal government solving problems by scaling back its role?

The president would stand a better chance of success if he could bring himself to consider sensible, targeted solutions designed to achieve incremental but tangible gains. Take the "one-page" alternative for health care reform that has appeared in these pages ("The Small Bill," February 8, 2010). At least three of its seven proposals—ending runaway malpractice lawsuits, allowing Americans to buy insurance across state lines, and allowing companies to offer lower premiums for healthier lifestyles—could be implemented independently, with or without the rest of the bill. All three involve having the government or the legal system get out of the way, thereby enabling health care costs to decline.

Two of the other small-bill proposals could be implemented in tandem. We could finally end the unfair tax on the uninsured (and self-insured), giving them a tax-break similar to the one already available to those with employer-provided insurance. And we could pay for this by reallocating some of the federally administered funds that help cover the costs of treating the uninsured, and converting the rest into block-grants to the states.

The small-bill approach shows that governing this country need not invite the constant frustrations of crafting "academically approved," federal-government-centered, comprehensive solutions to nearly every imaginable human problem, and then having to face the dispiriting struggle of getting these "elegant" solutions through our "unfortunately" democratic institutions—especially when the people, for some reason, don't want them. ♦

What Do Dissidents Want?

A little support from Washington, for starters.

BY ELLEN BORK

The Obama administration is faltering on democracy and human rights. Take the president's November trip to China. His "town hall meeting" was stage-managed by Communist authorities, and Liu Xiaobo, the most prominent dissident on a list given to Chinese authorities, was sentenced a few weeks later to 11 years in jail. Iranian protesters have asked whether Obama is "with us or with them," meaning the Iranian regime. Even the president's performance in Russia last July elicited faint praise. "Less than we needed, but more than we expected," said Garry Kasparov, a leader of Solidarity Russia, after the president met with civil society activists and opposition politicians.

What do dissidents want? With few exceptions, they welcome American support, moral but also material. Yet their views are not always represented in the often abstract debate over what priority should be given to democracy and human rights in foreign policy. That issue is usually framed as a trade-off. The United States, the argument goes, needs cooperation from dictatorships like Russia, China, Egypt, and Iran on nuclear proliferation, terrorism, Middle East peace, and most recently climate change. If democracy and human rights are subordinated to these goals, that is regrettable but necessary. In any case, top officials are quick to lament their lack of "leverage" in pursuit of democracy and human rights, concluding that there is little to be done.

Dissidents, by contrast, are convinced the United States has leverage. "Believe me, everybody wants to be recognized by the United States, even those who have been professional at bashing the United States right and left," insisted Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian dissident, speaking in Washington last fall. "They realize that their legitimacy is contingent on being recognized by Western democracies." Ibrahim also challenges the assumption that cozying up to dictators yields rewards. "What have you gotten out of it?" he asks, referring to close relations with the Mubarak regime. "Nothing in the peace process. Not one inch beyond what the late President Sadat accomplished. Not one iota. And yet the regime is using its role in the peace process to keep the pressure off." If anything, Egypt's "cold peace" with Israel has only gotten chillier.

In Iran, the administration distances itself from the "Green" opposition movement, believing this necessary to progress on the nuclear issue. This is a mistake, judging from the remarks of Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian lawyer who won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize. Ebadi has argued that it is human rights—not the nuclear issue—that holds the key to change in Iran and that a democratic Iran could be counted on either to abandon the pursuit of nuclear weapons or to refrain from threatening the United States or Israel. Pressure on the nuclear issue allows the regime to stoke nationalist sentiment, "but if the West presses also on its human rights record, [Ahmadinejad] will find himself in a position where his popular base is getting weaker and weaker by the day."

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Iranians, in this view, see human rights as universal and deserving of outside support; it is only the regime that casts human rights as a Western plot. Alienating Iran's population may come back to haunt the United States, much as it did when Washington backed the shah. Iran's people are quite pro-American, according to democracy advocate Ali Afshari, but "if they find that the United States does not care about their situation . . . they [may] change their mind, and support the hostile approach, the anti-American approach."

While policymakers fear that supporting dissidents will hurt them, dissidents tend to see their governments' sensitivity to American interference as an indication of vulnerability. Nor are they overly concerned about the danger to themselves from American support. Liu Junning, a Chinese intellectual who belongs to the Charter 08 movement, acknowledges that support from outside may cause dissidents trouble in the short term but welcomes it nonetheless. Dissidents are already in trouble with the regime, he says. "If the support is not there it will hurt much more."

As much as policymakers might wish to subordinate democracy and human rights to what they perceive as more pressing national security interests, the two are not so easily separated. Both reflect a country's character and purpose. Obama's decision to cold shoulder the Dalai Lama last October not only damaged Tibetans but also diminished America's moral standing. The effects will linger, even after the president meets with the Dalai Lama this Thursday.

Perhaps no one understands this better than Vaclav Havel, the playwright and political prisoner who became the first president of post-Communist Czechoslovakia. Havel declared himself bothered "much more" by President Obama's treatment of the Dalai Lama last year than by Washington's reversal on stationing a missile defense system in the Czech Republic. "It is only a minor compromise," said Havel, "but exactly with these minor compromises start the big and dangerous ones, the real problems."

If dissidents make the connection between strategic objectives and human rights more readily than do many people in positions of power it is because dissidents understand, from their own experience, that doing nothing when confronted with a matter of principle has consequences even if they were not intended. Dissidents suffer the costs when democratic societies compromise, and are bolstered and safer when the same societies stand up for principle, and for them.

When the United States undermines the Dalai Lama, or stays on the sidelines while Iranians try to change their government, or looks the other way as the Kremlin perverts democratic institutions, there is indeed a trade-off. But it is not the one that officials seeking strategic breakthroughs intend. ♦

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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Texas Deathmatch

Two GOP heavyweights in a fight to the finish.

BY FRED BARNES

Austin, Texas

Texas governor Rick Perry and Sarah Palin are friends from her years as governor of Alaska. In April 2008, a very pregnant Palin joined Perry and other Republican governors in Dallas at a conference on energy. While addressing the group, Palin suddenly turned to Perry and asked him to take the microphone. She had gone into labor. Palin rushed to the airport and flew back to Alaska, where her son Trig was born.

Last week, Palin returned to Texas to speak at a rally for Perry outside Houston. (She noted Trig was "almost a Texan.") Perry is facing a primary challenge from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, and Palin took up the theme of his campaign: He's the Texas candidate, Hutchison belongs to the alien world of Washington. "What's it going to be," Palin said, "the way they operate in D.C. or the way y'all get things done in Texas?"

Perry, 59, made the most of Palin's appearance. It was hours before the Super Bowl. "Think about it," he said. "In ten years, you may not remember whether the Colts or Saints won, but you'll never forget the time you got to see one of America's superstar conservative leaders and joined with thousands of your fellow conservatives standing tall for conservatism."

Palin's entry into the Texas campaign wasn't quite that historic. But it did reflect the thrust of Perry's pitch for a third full term as governor. "The answer," he declared at the rally, "is less Washington and more Texas." And Palin's embrace of Perry targeted the conservative grassroots of the Republican party in Texas in a way that Hutchison can't match.

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Hutchison, 66, first elected to the Senate in 1993, is the preferred candidate of the party's upper crust, which has soured on Perry. She's been endorsed by George H.W. Bush, Dick Cheney, James Baker, Phil Gramm, and a host of Texans identified with the two Bush administrations. (The only prominent Bushie to back Perry is Joe Allbaugh, a campaign aide to George W. Bush in 2000 and later the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.)

The Perry-Hutchison race is a battle of Texas titans. They are the state's biggest names, the leading political heavyweights, and (along with Senator John Cornyn) its top elected officials.

A truce of sorts was reached when Perry sent word through emissaries that 2006 would be his 'last' race for governor, and 2010 would be Hutchison's turn. Whatever was settled four years ago was blown up in April 2008 when Perry announced for reelection.

Sharply contested primaries are often defended as invigorating for political parties. But this one is more likely to be harmful to whoever wins. Perry and Hutchison have portrayed each other in harsh terms—Perry as a patron of cronyism that borders on corruption; Hutchison as an aloof, Washington big spender—that practically write the TV ads for the Democratic candidate, probably former Houston mayor Bill White. Perry is regarded as the stronger primary candidate, Hutchison the better vote-getter in the general election because of her appeal to moderates. At the moment, Perry leads Hutchison by double digits in primary polls. Against White, both run about 5 percentage points ahead.

The trepidation of Republicans is twofold. Should White win the governorship, he might sweep Democrats into office at the state and local level, particularly in Houston and Dallas. Even if Republicans retain control of the state legislature, White as governor could force reapportionment of congressional districts into the federal courts just as Texas is gaining as many as four or five House seats thanks to population growth. That could cost Republicans seats.

At a time when the party is just recovering from heavy defeats in 2006 and 2008, the loss of Texas would be a major setback—and awfully embarrassing. For the past two decades, Texas has been one of the biggest arenas of Republican success.

But the anxiety, while not unfounded, is overblown. I suspect one reason for the angst is that the Perry-Hutchison battle has become a blood feud. Another is that it was unnecessary. Hutchison is the most successful Republican office seeker in Texas history. She has never received less than 60 percent of the vote in her four Senate races. She wanted to run for governor in 2006 and tried to force Perry to withdraw without a primary contest.

He didn't flinch. As lieutenant governor, he succeeded George W. Bush when he resigned in 2000 after his election as president. Perry was then elected in 2002. In 2006, he rounded up impressive support across Texas and refused to surrender to Hutchison.

A truce of sorts was reached when Perry sent word through emissaries that 2006 would be his "last" race for governor, and 2010 would be Hutchison's turn. Karl Rove, then White House political chief, was among those who prompted her to drop plans to run in 2006.

Whatever was settled four years ago was blown up in April 2008 when Perry announced for reelection. After getting only 39 percent in a four-way race in 2006, his prospects looked

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bleak. In early 2009, he trailed Hutchison by 20 percentage points in polls. He was already set to become the longest serving governor ever in Texas. Reelection in 2010 and extending his tenure to 14 years seemed a stretch.

But Perry's army of critics underestimated him. He fashioned himself as the guardian of Texas against the encroachments of Washington. He embraced the tea party movement. On April 15, Tax Day, Perry spoke at tea party rallies in Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin. "He really regained his footing," says Terry Sullivan, Hutchison's campaign manager. "She focused on being a United States senator. He ran around the state talking about secession."

In truth, Perry never uttered the word "secession," but he alluded to it. After the tea party event in Austin, he was questioned by reporters about the murmurs of secession. "There's a lot of different scenarios," the governor said. "We've got a great union. There's absolutely no reason to dissolve it. But if Washington continues to thumb their nose at the American people, you know, who knows what might come out of that. But Texas is a very unique place and we're a pretty independent lot to boot." With opposition to President Obama sweeping Texas, Perry's words crystallized his role as a leading foe of the Obama administration's policies.

As Perry soared, Hutchison sagged. She had a "rough summer," says Sullivan. "She wanted to run for governor in the worst way," a sympathetic Republican official says, "and she has run in the worst way." She promised to quit the Senate, then postponed the date for resignation several times. For months, she was peppered with questions about when she would step down. Even Perry got in the act, asking her during a televised debate in January when she intended to resign.

While extolling Texas, Perry accuses Hutchison of "tearing down" the state. He insisted, in another debate last month, that "nobody gets confused that this is the best state in the nation to be living in today. We lead the nation in development of jobs." This wouldn't be the case if Texas followed Hutchison's "spend-it-all-spend-it-now approach," he said.

Perry has "in many ways dispelled the notion that governor of Texas is an inherently weak office," Jason Embry of the *Austin American-Statesman* wrote last week. He has demanded loyalty from the many aides he's appointed to top state jobs. But he has suffered two significant defeats as governor, and accusations of cronyism and slipshod ethics have grown in recent months.

Rick Perry and Kay Bailey Hutchison

He proposed building the Trans-Texas Corridor, a toll road along I-35, the north-south interstate. The plan, which would have included seizing large amounts of private land, was killed by the Republican-led legislature. So was his proposed mandate to vaccinate every sixth-grade girl against a virus that causes cervical cancer. On both issues, former Perry aides were lobbyists for the private companies poised to benefit the most. In other cases, he has installed allies in positions over which the governor has historically had no direct control.

Hutchison has seized on the cronyism. "There are two ways to get things done in Austin," one of her TV ads says. "Hire a lobbyist and donate to this governor [a picture of Perry is shown] or elect a new one." In a televised debate sponsored by the *Dallas Morning News*, she said: "You might ask why did we have a plan for the Trans-Texas Corridor? Why did the governor mandate vaccines for our young daughters? It was because there were lobbyists that were first, not the people of Texas." Perry, who has defended both proposals, didn't respond.

That debate was a mixed blessing for Hutchison. She was crossexamined on her pro-choice position on abortion, as she had been in the first debate. Hutchison refused to say if she favors overturning *Roe* v. *Wade*. (She voted for a resolution in 2003 affirming it.) In a confusing answer, she suggested repealing *Roe* v. *Wade* would lead to abortion "havens" in some states.

Hutchison's few deviations from conservatism aren't her biggest problem. "Her record is four times more conservative than her rhetoric," says Sullivan, the campaign manager. Her biggest failure has been an inability to spell out a compelling rationale for her candidacy.

Texas voters, especially Republicans, are happy with her in Washington. She's the most popular political figure in the state. Yet, assuming Perry wins the primary, he'll be the favorite to win another four years as governor.

One more thing. The agony of a bitter primary for Republicans may extend past March 2. If the third Republican candidate, Debra Medina—a Ron Paul follower—attracts enough votes she could deny Perry or Hutchison a majority and force a runoff on April 13.

Given that Perry voters are the most likely to vote, his chances in a runoff look good. But unexpected things can happen in politics. Hutchison, should she lose to Perry, may make the perfectly sensible decision to stay in the Senate. If that happens, Republicans may get what they've wanted all along: to keep Governor Perry and Senator Hutchison. No doubt Palin would be pleased, too. ♦

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Democrat in Danger

A Reagan Republican aims to take back Maryland's First District. BY EMILY ESFAHANI SMITH

Frank Kratovil is perhaps the most vulnerable Democrat in the House of Representatives. The 41-year-old freshman won Maryland's First Congressional District by just 1 percentage point in 2008. But it's a district that has historically tended red, and its citizens are far less enamored of Kratovil a year later. He faced a summer of discontent over health care reform last year. One event in July garnered national attention after a protestor hung Kratovil in effigy. At a town hall in August, one of his constituents speaking about health care told him, "We don't want your help." The audience booed when the congressman tried to justify his support for cap and trade.

Maryland's First District lies on the Eastern Shore, a nine-county strip of land wedged between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. But as a result of gerrymandering, bits of the district stretch west of the bay into the more urban Harford, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore counties. MD-1 voters sent a Republican to Congress from 1990 to 2008. In 2008, McCain won it 58 percent to 40 percent; in 2004, Bush beat Kerry by a 26-point margin. Kratovil campaigned as a Blue Dog Democrat and, with a Democratic wave nationwide, slipped through by 3,000 votes.

Today, though, it "is a totally different political environment," says a spokesman at the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) who monitors the district, "Kratovil having completely broken his promises to be a moderate Democrat." The *Cook Political Report* is already rating the race a tossup. "This is one of our top pickup opportunities in the country," the NRCC spokesman said.

The 2010 campaign in MD-1 is a crucial test for the GOP and a bellwether of the party's attempt to regain control of the House.

The likely GOP challenger is Andy Harris, a state senator, fiscal conservative, and tea party regular. He is also the candidate who narrowly lost to Kratovil in 2008. Kratovil won the seat thanks not just to the Democratic electoral trend but also to a messy Republican primary. Harris had challenged the incumbent, Wayne Gilchrest. Harris had a record of endorsing low taxes and restrained government spending during 12 years in the state senate, while Gilchrest had been moving further and further left over his nine terms. Republican voters, says Harris, were upset that Gilchrest had "left the mainstream of the party." Harris won the primary by 10 percentage points—43 to 33—and Gilchrest promptly endorsed Kratovil.

Andy Harris

ASSOCIATED PRESS / MATTHEW S. GUNBY

But that was 2008. The political mood has shifted, and Kratovil has a record. Rather than an independent-minded Blue Dog, he has voted with his party 84 percent of the time. Nor has he pursued the fiscally conservative policies the Blue Dogs favor. He voted in favor of the stimulus, is on record supporting the public option for health care—though he voted against the House version of the health care bill in the end—and endorsed cap and trade. Back in June, on the day before cap and trade was brought to a vote, *The Hill* reported that Kratovil was seen on the House floor "shaking his head no as Pelosi buttonholed him." The next day, he voted for cap and trade.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee still paints him as a nonpartisan Blue Dog. "Congressman Kratovil has been an independent voice for his district. . . . He has focused his efforts on reining in spending and reducing the deficit, and that's a record he's going to stand by during this year's campaign," a spokesman said.

But Harris says that he's not just running against Kratovil, but also Nancy Pelosi and her ideologically driven policies. "Kratovil sees government as a solution to our problems . . . but the people want Reagan-style conservatism," he says.

Already on the campaign trail in advance of a Republican primary he is expected to win easily, Harris paints himself as a fiscal conservative first and foremost. In the state senate, he points out, he voted against every tax increase, every Democratic budget proposal, and even a few Republican ones that he found extravagant. If elected to Congress, he says he will not apply for earmarks.

Asked if his constituents may resent that another district gets the federal dollars they could have received from earmarks, Harris says, "You don't lose projects when you move away from earmarks. You just let the normal appropriations process take place. People understand that earmarks aren't special dollars—they are tax dollars that go to D.C. and then to the district." In an election year where angry voters are lashing out against Washington's borrowing and spending policies, his position on earmarks could prove popular.

Popular enough to beat Kratovil. We'll see in November. ♦

Emily Esfahani Smith is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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'We Are the World'

First time farce, second time . . .

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

The first week of February, a group of more than 75 celebrities met in a studio on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles to re-record "We Are the World." The occasion was the January earthquake in Haiti, which left the bedraggled, destitute country even more bedraggled and destitute.

But Haiti was just the proximate excuse for the new "We Are the World." Plans were already in the works to re-record the song to mark the 25th anniversary of the first "We Are the World." In other words, it's not fair to blame the Haitians for this new round of celebrity self-congratulation. These people were going to do it anyway. Who is to blame? Two of the most destructive forces of the 20th century: the United Nations and the Beatles.

American musicians have been preening for charity for a long time. In 1940, for instance, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and other assorted lefty singers put on a "Grapes of Wrath Evening in New York" to raise money for the John Steinbeck Committee for Agricultural Workers. In 1970, Joni Mitchell and James Taylor headlined a show in Vancouver to help Greenpeace send a boat expedition to Amchitka to protest a nuclear test.

But the modern pop-benefit extravaganza began on August 1, 1971, when George Harrison staged a two-day "Concert for Bangladesh" at Madison Square Garden. Moved by the plight of refugees who fled to India during Bangladesh's war of independence, Harrison teamed up with UNICEF to raise money for relief. He put together an all-star bill including Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan. The other three Beatles were invited. Naturally, Ringo showed up. McCartney declined while Lennon initially accepted, only to change his mind when Harrison requested that Yoko Ono not insert herself into the performance.

Nonetheless, the 40,000 tickets sold out in six hours. The concert raised $243,418, and the ensuing album and movie documentary brought in, roughly, another $12 million. Hearts were opened; consciousness was raised; John Lennon was angry.

Not that it did the Bangladeshis much good. The $243,418 from the concert gate got to the United Nations pretty quickly, but the rest of the proceeds—about $8.8 million after expenses—were tied up in accounting for the better part of a decade. It wasn't until 1981 that UNICEF received the balance, by which time Bangladesh had won its independence and was already onto its seventh presidential strongman. The money would surely have been welcome in 1981, since Bangladesh was (and remains) one of the poorest places on earth. But how much difference could $8.8 million really make? Since 1971, Bangladesh has been given more than $30 *billion* in grant aid and loan commitments to little effect.

The effect of the event on the music world, however, was substantial. In 1979, UNICEF sponsored another benefit concert, "Music for UNICEF," which brought the Bee Gees, ABBA, Rod Stewart, and others to perform in the U.N.'s General Assembly Hall.

Not to be outdone by Harrison, Paul McCartney partnered with UNICEF for his own benefit concert later that year, "The Concerts for the People of Kampuchea," staged in London over four nights with such acts as Queen and Elvis Costello. McCartney sold 35,000 tickets; a follow-up concert album and documentary were released. All told, the enterprise raised $400,000, which was handed over as a check to UNICEF—two years later. What good was $400,000 to a country with no government, in the midst of a protracted war between the brutal, semi-deposed Khmer Rouge and brutal, advancing Vietnamese invaders? Good question. In any event, the United Nations was happy to accept the money.

There were other benefits through these years—from Amnesty International's "Secret Policeman's Ball" series to the "No Nukes" concert at Madison Square Garden—but they rarely rose to the level of charitable endeavor. They were cultural poses, disguised as political rallies, masquerading as rock concerts. It wasn't until the mid-1980s that pop stars got serious—really serious—about making the world a better place. The occasion was the discovery of a place irresistibly chic and downtrodden: a place called Africa.

In 1984, Harry Belafonte heard "Do They Know It's Christmas," a song featuring 45 British pop stars. The single

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HAL MAYFORTH

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was produced by an organization called Band Aid and the proceeds went to benefit the starving masses in Africa—particularly Ethiopians, who were much in the news in the mid-1980s. ("Africa is sexy and people need to know that," Bono—one of the participants—would explain some years later.)

Belafonte decided to do a similar project in the States. He asked Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson to write a song while he established the charitable organization which would run the enterprise, USA for Africa. (The acronym stands for "United Support of Artists for Africa.") The song Richie and Jackson concocted was blindingly insipid:

> We are the world
> We are the children
> We are the ones who make a
> brighter day
> So let's start giving
> There's a choice we're making
> We're saving our own lives
> It's true we'll make a better day
> *Just you and me.*

Even so, 45 of America's pop icons, from Cyndi Lauper to Bruce Springsteen, signed on and made it a hit. Released in March 1985, "We Are the World" went four-times platinum. Sales and merchandizing from T-shirts, books, posters, and more raised roughly $53 million to meet the urgent needs in Ethiopia.

With this war chest, Belafonte and members of his group went on a "fact-finding" mission to Africa where they discovered—somewhat belatedly—that the famines there were largely man-made, the products of corrupt governments intentionally starving people. Ken Kragen, USA for Africa's president, told the *New York Times*, "What we've learned is that it's not just a question of sending more money or more food." The *Times* reported:

> [T]here was the somewhat startling revelation that the relief workers involved in programs to feed the hungry were not asking that more food be purchased and shipped from the United States. The ports and warehouses of Ethiopia and the Sudan are already choked with food, the relief workers said. But arcane political, economic and logistical constraints have been preventing the bulk of the food that has arrived from reaching people in need. Similarly, many doctors advised against sending plane load after plane load of medical supplies. Africa's most deadly disease is worsening poverty, they said, and it will take more than antibiotics to cure that. . . . By the time the U.S.A. for Africa team headed home this week, they had not decided how to spend most of the money that has been raised.

Still unsure what to do about Africa, in 1986 the group sponsored another fundraiser, "Hands Across America," where millions of people paid $10 each to hold hands in an unbroken chain across the country and sing "We Are the World." (There was not an *actual* unbroken chain of hands across America, mind you. The organizers merely claimed enough people participated that, if they had been arranged in a perfectly straight line, they *could have* made it from sea to shining sea.)

Between "We Are the World" and Hands Across America, USA for Africa banked nearly $70 million. By early 1987, the group told reporters that it had sent $5.5 million to Ethiopia, $6 million to Sudan, and $15 million to eight other African countries. The rest of their money stood pat, dribbling out here and there over the years, just a tiny rivulet of the $1 trillion in aid foreigners sent to the continent during the last 60 years. Not that the group didn't make some lasting impacts. In 1991, for instance, USA for Africa announced the establishment of the Leland Community Development Fellowship to bring African development leaders every year to network on the sacred ground at the Carter Center.

Nevertheless, the benefit concert persisted. Following "Do They Know It's Christmas" and "We Are the World," more pop stars signed up for the Live Aid mega-concert during the summer of 1985. The two concerts, simultaneously in London and Philadelphia—Phil Collins was so concerned about Africa that he took the Concorde and played both shows—attracted a global TV audience of some 400 million viewers. It was billed as "The day the music changed the world." (Note the second "the.") The money raised—somewhere between $80 million and $110 million, depending on who you believe—sounded impressive. But as the *Los Angeles Times* reported, "All the rock charities combined earned less than $125 million in 1985. . . . The Red Cross received more help from the Mormon Church than from Live Aid and USA for Africa combined—and with only a fraction of the publicity."

What's never been clear is that the money the rock charities spent did any good. A long exposé in the British journal *Prospect* in 2005 concluded the rock 'n' roll aid that actually reached Africa often worked to the benefit of the dictators who were causing the famines in the first place.

But the concerts continued. There was Farm Aid, raising money for American family farmers, and Self Aid, raising money for the unemployed in Ireland. In 1991, "The Simple Truth" was put on in London to aid Kurdish refugees. That show was caught in the crosscurrents of charitable fashions: Just

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days before the event, the Red Cross had to settle a dispute among Sting, Sinead O'Connor, and Peter Gabriel over whether the proceeds should be shared with victims of a typhoon in Bangladesh and starvation in Africa.

After 9/11, there were concerts to raise money for the victims—few of whom seemed to need money. In 2005 came "Live 8," followed in 2007 by Live Earth. By this point, concert organizers had given up the pretense of raising money, instead claiming they merely wanted to diddle the public's consciousness. (About Third World debt forgiveness and global warming, respectively, in case you've forgotten.)

It's difficult to pin down exactly what such shows accomplish. The money raised is always minuscule in relation to the problems at hand. Put together, the proceeds from "We Are the World" and Live Aid wouldn't be enough to save Chrysler, let alone the African continent.

But maybe it's not really about the actual dollars and cents. The producer of Live Aid, Mike Mitchell, noted:

> Africa was [a] kind of test for the civilized world. It was our souls that were at risk, not theirs. It's a totally selfish act. I mean, they will go on being Africans, doing what they do and they will ultimately save themselves or not. But if we don't reach out, we've already sealed our fate. We've lost our humanism. We've lost caring. We've lost what I call our souls.

Entertainment Weekly reported on the travails of caring with a sequence of vignettes from the "We Are the World" recording session:

> [H]armonic convergence nearly fell apart, however, when Stevie Wonder announced the chorus would sing a line in Swahili. Some of the country singers were fit to be tied. Waylon Jennings walked out and didn't come back. Finally a line in English was used instead. At 4 A.M. two Ethiopian women were escorted into the studio. "Thank you on behalf of everyone from our country," one of them said.

Now we'll be subjected to this rubbish all over again. Surely the people of Haiti have suffered enough. ♦

A Happy Election in Latin America

For a change.

BY MICHAEL GOLDFARB

San Jose, Costa Rica

Costa Ricans went to the polls on February 7 and elected their first female president, Laura Chinchilla. As the candidate of the governing party and the chosen successor of incumbent Oscar Arias, Chinchilla could hardly run on hope and change. Instead, her campaign slogan declared her to be "firm and honest," an implicit acknowledgment of the concerns most voters had about her candidacy—that she would be a puppet of Arias and that she would be no less corrupt than her predecessors (two former Costa Rican presidents have been imprisoned on charges of graft in recent years).

Laura Chinchilla

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In the event, those concerns were hardly enough to keep Chinchilla from smashing through the glass ceiling that our Hillary failed to crack. Chinchilla benefited from a weak and fractured opposition, but more than that from an electorate pretty content with the direction of their country.

And why shouldn't they be? Costa Rica has been hurt by the recession—a large portion of the country's economy is dependent on tourism from the United States, which has declined precipitously—but it remains a remarkable success story. Indeed, if the rest of Latin America looked like Costa Rica—democratic, prosperous, and demilitarized—it would be more than the author of the Monroe Doctrine could ever have hoped for.

Chinchilla's win was in no small part a reflection of the high marks (a 60 percent approval rating) Costa Ricans give Arias, who managed to help them avoid the worst of the global economic downturn while overseeing a massive effort to improve the country's infrastructure. His foreign policy endeavors were less successful. Arias won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 during his first four-year term as president (Costa Rican law requires two intervening presidents before any attempt at reelection) for efforts to end the civil wars that then plagued Central America. This time around Arias sought to relive that former glory by inserting himself into the recent constitutional crisis in Honduras.

Acting at the behest of the Obama administration, Arias attempted to broker a resolution that would have seen Manuel Zelaya, a close ally of Hugo Chávez, returned to the Honduran presidency after having been ousted by the Congress with the consent of the Honduran Constitutional Court. The Obama-Arias intervention was a disaster, and both Costa Rica and the United States are now quietly working

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to restore relations with the new, democratically elected president of Honduras, Porfirio Lobo Sosa.

Nuria Marin, one of Chinchilla's key advisers and a likely foreign minister in the new administration, said that Costa Rica would seek a "fresh start" with Honduras once Arias left office. "Laura will be more focused on the domestic agenda," she said. Libertarian candidate Otto Guevara, who finished third after seeing his poll numbers collapse in the run up to the election, said the "government acted [in Honduras] without all the facts." Guevara also seemed to take a swipe at Obama, saying that "people started making judgments in Honduras without knowing the laws of Honduras." And he promised that, if elected, he would "congratulate Lobo and help Honduras return to normality."

Honduras wasn't the only place where the Arias foreign policy stirred controversy. Costa Rica had been one of two countries to maintain an embassy in Jerusalem when Arias took office his second time. He ordered the embassy moved to Tel Aviv and offered official recognition to the "state" of Palestine, causing a rift with Israel but ingratiating his government with Arab states. (He also switched the country's diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to mainland China.)

What, precisely, Arias gained for Costa Rica (or himself) from the decision to move the embassy out of Jerusalem is the subject of some speculation; no one seems to know for sure, and most assume some quid pro quo. More concrete, quite literally, are the effects of the switch in recognition to China. The Chinese government is building a massive stadium in the country's capital, using an imported Chinese labor force, as a gift to the people of Costa Rica.

Oddly, it was the leftist candidate Otton Solis, whom Arias narrowly defeated in the 2006 election and who was runner-up once again this year, who offered the harshest criticism of the stadium. He promised that if elected, he would name it in honor of the Dalai Lama. Indeed, Solis hardly presented himself as a leftist at all. It was Guevara—who had proposed a national flat tax and played up his close ties to the Cato Institute (his former assistant runs the think-tank's Latin America program) as evidence of his free market bona fides—that Costa Ricans kept telling me was a Communist.

Guevara's steep decline in the polls coincided with a series of articles in the country's leading newspaper raising question about the sources of his campaign funding, but few voters I talked to were aware of any of that. Perhaps it was his campaign colors—red and white—that led voters to believe he was a Communist. Or maybe it was his plan to eliminate taxes on the poor (an attempt to make his flat tax more progressive) or his promise to provide every primary student in Costa Rica with a free laptop.

When I asked a Solis supporter who was volunteering at a polling place amid the carnival-like atmosphere of Election Day why people thought Guevara was a Communist, he shrugged. "I studied medicine in the Soviet Union, I know what a Communist is—Otto is not a Communist," he said. "People confuse Communism and fascism." Whatever the explanation, the penchant working class Costa Ricans have for labeling their opponents Communists is perhaps the best evidence that Costa Rica is set to remain a haven for capitalism, democracy, and freedom in an otherwise troubled region. ♦

Who's Behind the Houthis?

A proxy war in Yemen.

BY DAVID SCHENKER

Nearly 50 years ago, Yemen fought a civil war pitting the Egyptian-backed government in Sana against insurgents supported by Saudi Arabia and its cadre of European mercenaries. The six-year war was bloody: At one low point in the campaign, Cairo resorted to mustard gas and nerve agents in an effort to stem the rebel tide. In the end, the government prevailed, but not before Egypt lost 26,000 troops.

Today in Yemen, the outlines of the conflict differ. Sana is challenged in the North by Shiite rebels (the Zaydi Houthi), in the South by impoverished Sunni separatists, and throughout by al Qaeda. Despite the new cast of characters, however, the current round of fighting features some parallels to its predecessor. Most striking among these is that Yemen again appears to be developing into a proxy war, the latest battlefield in the conflict between Iran and the "moderate" Arab states.

As in other Middle Eastern states with weak central governments—most notably Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Authority—the militant clerical regime in Iran has aligned itself with forces in Yemen seeking to destabilize the government and reverse the state's ostensibly pro-West orientation. Saudi Arabia—which long ago supported rebels seeking to topple the government in Sana—is now working to help insulate President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime from the rebel threat.

Riyadh is not supporting Saleh out of altruism. The Houthis are based along the Yemeni-Saudi frontier. Given the history—in the 1960s, Egyptian-backed groups executed several acts of sabotage in Saudi Arabia, including against the ministry of defense and a Saudi airbase near the Yemeni bor-

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der—Riyadh is understandably concerned about border security.

In November 2009, the Houthis crossed the border and seized a parcel of Saudi territory, prompting a swift military reply. Since then, the Saudis have skirmished with the Houthis on both sides of the border and have suffered significant losses. To date, more than 110 Saudi soldiers have been killed and six captured by Houthi forces. It has also been widely reported that a Saudi Apache helicopter was shot down by the rebels. Perhaps not surprisingly, Riyadh has blamed Tehran for Houthi military prowess.

The accusations have played out mainly in the Saudi press. In December 2009, the Saudi-owned London-based daily *Asharq al-Awsat* reported that "high ranking officials" from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps along with Lebanese Hezbollah met with Houthi rebels to coordinate military operations against Saudi Arabia. More recently, the Saudi assistant defense minister hinted at Iranian involvement in the fighting, noting, "it is not possible that [the Houthis] obtained the weapons deployed against us themselves."

To date, little hard evidence of direct Iranian support to the Houthis has emerged. The Yemenis say they have proof they have shared with their Iranian counterparts, but they have not yet publicly presented their case against Iran. Nevertheless, for the past year, the Yemenis have relentlessly accused Tehran of aiding the Houthis.

Last year, for example, President Saleh claimed that Hezbollah had trained Houthis on "grenades, mines and arms"; Yemeni diplomats similarly claim that Houthis have been trained by the Revolutionary Guard in Iran. In October 2009, Sana announced it had seized an Iranian ship transporting anti-tank weapons to the Houthis. And just a few weeks ago, while visiting the United States, Yemen's foreign minister told the pan-Arab daily *Al-Hayat* that the rebels were receiving financial support "from Shiite authorities in and outside of Iran."

Still other sources—including the intelligence publication STRATFOR—claim that Iran's ally Syria has been facilitating movement of jihadists to Yemen, and that Iran itself has been funneling support to the Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula—the potent group that sponsored the Christmas Day attempt to bring down a passenger jet over Detroit.

Tehran has not denied the Saudi and Yemeni accusations so much as gone on the offensive against Saudi Arabia. During a televised speech on January 13, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned Riyadh for "enter[ing] the war and us[ing] bombs . . . and machine guns against Muslims."

That Ahmadinejad would defend the Houthis comes as no surprise. The Houthis call their philosophy "pure Shia" and openly declare allegiance to

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*The Economic Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the U.S. Economy: Employment, Labor Income and Value Added, PricewaterhouseCoopers, September 2009
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Tehran. When asked last year about the bond between Iran and the rebels, leading Houthi cleric Issam al Imad compared the group's leader, Hussein al Houthi, to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, a vassal of Tehran.

The preponderance of evidence suggests a significant relationship between Tehran and the Houthis. But even if Yemeni and Saudi claims of Iranian support to the rebels are overstated, given Tehran's track record, it seems likely that Iran is playing some role in fanning the flames of insurgency in Yemen.

Washington has not yet implicated Tehran. But the administration may be moving in that direction. On January 21, the commander of U.S. forces in the region, General David Petraeus, suggested that "some indicators" could point to Iranian involvement in the conflict. Then, on January 31, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman told *Al-Hayat* that while Washington takes the accusations seriously, "we do not have evidence that the Iranian interference with the Houthis is as deep as is the case with Hezbollah." Feltman is among the finest and most candid of U.S. diplomats. So it is noteworthy that he does not outright deny Iranian involvement. In fact, his analogy seems to confirm it.

It is possible—as Yemeni officials claim—that U.S. efforts to date to downplay this issue are related to a desire not to undermine talks over Tehran's nuclear program. This explanation, while troubling, would comport with the Obama administration's hesitancy to back Iraq's accusations of Syrian complicity in the August 2009 bombings in Baghdad that killed more than 100, for fear criticism of Damascus would scuttle U.S. efforts to engage with the Assad regime.

However much support Iran may be providing the Houthis, Washington's allies in Riyadh and Cairo increasingly view the conflict in Yemen as a fight with Iran. In a region mired in conflicts with Iran, Yemen would appear to be the latest battleground.

In the coming weeks, the United States is slated to boost its 200-strong Special Forces training contingent already in Yemen. Not only will U.S. soldiers be targeted by the Houthis—based on a January 14 *fatwa* against foreign troops signed by 150 non-Houthi clerics including a member of parliament—U.S. forces could also find themselves in the sights of average Yemenis.

The troop deployment to train Yemeni forces represents not only a burgeoning counterterrorism partnership with Sana, but an opportunity to contain Iranian expansion in the Gulf. In this increasingly complex and dangerous environment, the sooner Washington understands the degree to which the Houthi are Iranian surrogates, the better able the U.S. forces there will be to counter the threat and mitigate the risk of another failed Middle East state. ♦

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The Struggle for Iran

The Islamic Republic is alive but not well

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Supreme leader Ali Khamenei had a good day on February 11. If the pro-democracy Green movement had managed to send hundreds of thousands of demonstrators once again onto Tehran's streets, his *heybat*—the indispensable awe behind dictatorship—would have been finished. Backed by an enormous security force drawn from all over the country, the regime let the world know that Khamenei still rules. So is the opposition finished? And has the Islamic Republic's theocracy now mutated into a crude police state, an Iranian version of the Arab autocracies that become ever more unpopular and lifeless but don't collapse?

The answer to both questions is "no." Although the leaders of the Green movement—Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi, and Mohammad Khatami—and the college-educated foot-soldiers of the cause may doubt it, they, too, had a decent day. They survived. They've also learned a lesson that former prime minister Mousavi already knew: The opposition needs to expand its base into the poor quarters of Tehran and other large cities. The regime has essentially ceded the universities and the middle and upper classes to the opposition. This is a large strategic base. Apart from Turkey, Iran is the best-educated Muslim country in the Middle East. Education is highly valued; even the most conservative religious families send beloved daughters to Iran's best secular universities. Although the Islamic Republic's rulers have periodically waged war on higher education and its pernicious habit of turning "good Muslims" into inquiring minds, the revolution opened universities to the poor. The quality of an Iranian education isn't what it was under the shah, but universities have remained remarkably resilient institutions that incubate democratic sympathies.

Odds are the opposition has an army of fans among the poor—the so-called *mostazafan*, "the oppressed," whom the regime has always counted on. And when their intelligent sons and daughters go to school, they too often become democratic dissidents. But the Green movement has not figured out how to mobilize its impoverished friends (it's barely figured out how to mobilize the educated middle class). Although the 1979 Islamic revolution, like all revolutions, was a top-down affair, local mosques and their preachers proved effective revolutionary agents among the downtrodden. The Green movement has no equivalent. Without *sans-culottes*—working-class organizers—it's hard to see how the opposition can operationally outflank Khamenei's security services, which have fine-tuned their capacity to find and intimidate those who step forward.

But one shouldn't get too depressed. If the opposition can hang together philosophically (having family members beaten and imprisoned focuses the mind), it can afford to be patient. Iran has lots of national and religious holidays when the opposition can try again to take the streets. Although the regime can successfully deny the Internet and cell phone communication to its foes for short periods of time, the opposition can go low-tech. Older dissidents no doubt remember that the shah's secret police were regularly frustrated by anonymous pamphleteering—the famous *shabnamehs*, "night letters"—that chronicled the king's sins and helped organize the clerical and lay opposition. Oppression always produces dissident creativity. And Shiism is a faith that extols patience, suffering, and (finally) salvation.

The regime will have to keep an enormous reserve of riot-control forces ready for deployment in Tehran. This will probably leave other cities lightly covered. Although the opposition is disorganized (a virtue when the secret police are prowling), it probably possesses considerable intelligence-collection potential against the security services. Iranian families gossip, and the Iranian ruling elite, especially within the clergy, is a complex matrix of intermarriage, where pro-regime

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and pro-democracy relatives intermingle. It probably won't take the opposition too long to figure out which Basij—the lower-class riot-control thugs—and Revolutionary Guard units have been deployed to Tehran and elsewhere. The opposition will have some idea of when these forces come and go. They will increasingly have a better idea of where the regime has let down its guard.

All the opposition must do is keep challenging the authority of Khamenei. This will let Iranians know that the regime isn't omnipotent. And it will keep alive the possibility that the country's collective embitterment about the failure of the Islamic revolution to provide prosperity and happiness could explode. A big difference between a Marxist totalitarian system spiritually running out of gas and an Islamic theocracy withering is that faithful Muslims maintain a less forgiving standard of measure: the Holy Law and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and, in the case of Shiite Iranians, the traditions of Ali, the fountainhead of the Shiite creed. Unlike Marxists, Iran's Islamic rulers cannot just completely make it up as they go along. Although it sounds odd to Westerners, religion does not always play to the advantage of Iran's avowedly religious government. Faithful Muslims have a deeply held sense of justice—the justice that God promises every believer through the Law. Although Western observers of Iran have a strong tendency to believe that religion has become a contrivance for the powerful, this is wrong.

The regime remains in a precarious state. Each time it threatens the use of force it risks making a fatal mistake. Iranian culture is martyr-obsessed. If the wrong person gets killed, it will galvanize the opposition.

Certainly, there are members of the Iranian ruling elite who "know not God." Yet both rulers and ruled are generally men of faith. Marxism had collapsed into utter cynicism by the 1980s. It had earth-bound standards of achievement; it failed them, but Marxists could suppress with gusto any sign of discontent. Man-made morality is infinitely flexible. Iran's theocrats—and even their praetorians, the Revolutionary Guard Corps—claim to be operating on a higher level. Their regular disregard of the Holy Law can deeply anger the religious (let alone the millions of secular Iranians who now live more or less by Western norms). This is why the regime loathed the recently deceased Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, who passionately denied the regime religious legitimacy. The more Iran becomes like a classic police state, the more the regime's religious base cracks. Even the instruments of oppression—the faithful Guard Corps and the Basij—could have debilitating doubts. In Iran, the power that grows out of the barrel of a gun must contend with long-established Shiite Islamic ethics, which checks totalitarianism and gives the opposition, even the godless Westernized wing, some maneuvering room.

This is why the revolutionary regime has always lived in fear of the unexpected spark, something that would set in motion a tidal wave of disappointment. Historically, Muslims have regularly risen up because of a burning sense of justice denied. Former prime minister Mousavi, a passionate lover of the Islamic revolution, has this sense in spades. It's a good guess that the regime now sees the potential for sparks in many more places than it did before the fraudulent June 12 elections. The opposition certainly intends to play on this fear. Despite its success in squelching street demonstrations on February 11, the regime remains in a precarious state. It can use brute force to stay in power, but each time it threatens the use of force it risks making a fatal mistake. Iranian culture is martyr-obsessed. If the wrong person gets killed, it could galvanize the opposition. On February 11, the regime deployed overwhelming force and didn't have to—so far as we know—kill anyone. This was ideal. But if the opposition takes to the streets again, in large numbers or with greater audacity, a deadly collision may be unavoidable.

So far the regime has been lucky in a Shiite way: No really charismatic personality has taken center stage within the opposition. Former prime minister Mousavi is a stubborn and brave man, and he is not without friends inside the Revolutionary Guard. But he does not capture the imagination. And although Karroubi is a live wire capable of scathing criticism of the ruling elite, he, like former president Khatami, always gives the impression that he wishes the post-June 12 tumult had never happened. He has no compelling vision of the future. Khatami, however, does. Alone among the opposition's VIPs, Khatami could probably play the role of an Iranian James Madison, sketching out a practicable vision of a new republic. But Khatami is conflicted. He remains respectful of Khamenei and the ruling clerics even though he often gives the impression that he hates both. And his

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fan club has shrunk appreciably since 1997 when he captured 69 percent of the presidential vote.

Assuming the opposition can hang on, it wouldn't be surprising to see other brave souls come forward. When people are getting jailed, tortured, and killed, furious relatives in proud accomplished families can rise up. They might come from the clergy, the Revolutionary Guard Corps itself, or, like Mousavi, the lay religious notables. One day we won't see them; the next day we will. The real issue for the opposition, and the regime, is how many Iranians are willing to die for political change. The frightened and paranoid way the regime reacted to the death of the beautiful Neda Agha-Soltan should tell everyone how scared Khamenei's people are of women dying for the cause. Iran's reform movement has in great part been pushed forward by women. A deeply conservative society in rapid social transition, the Islamic Republic doesn't handle well brutality aimed at females—even highly Westernized ones. Kill a woman from the wrong family, and the regime could have hell to pay.

For the opposition, the post-June 12 tumult arrived too soon. The regime's successful crackdown will now force the opposition to think about what it wants and when. More Iranians, especially the religiously conservative who have no affection for Khamenei but also have an acute fear of chaos, need to get a clearer vision of what the Green movement stands for. The movement will probably need to reconcile its Westernized secular wing, who carry pictures of Khomeini in the streets as defensive shields, with the religious dissidents, who sincerely shout *Allahu akbar!* ("God is most great!") against theocracy. Formulating a governing philosophy while the regime's security services are trying to throw you in prison will not be easy. But the Islamic Republic has had a vivid literary culture for an autocracy: Dissident ideas somehow get published and passed around.

Khamenei may try to suppress Iranians' argumentative side, but it will be difficult for him to do so. A good dissident model, which the older members of the opposition know well, is Khomeini's *Hukumat-e Islami*, "Islamic Government," a collection of lectures that became his revolutionary blueprint. The more the opposition can provoke debate, the more likely it can shear off Khamenei's supporters. The opposition certainly knows after February 11 that it's in a long battle with Khamenei and his guards. The young and undoubtedly impatient Iranians who took to the streets after the June 12 elections, like the hundreds of thousands of Iranian exiles who have come alive watching their brothers and sisters fight the tyranny that drove them abroad, have time and probably Islam on their side. What they need most now are their poorer countrymen, the Basijis' relatives, to join their side. Basijis cannot kill these people. They are the key to Khamenei's fall.

Which brings us to what America should do while the Iranians fight this out. It's an odd fate that the United States should have as president a man with Muslim third-world roots who conducts foreign policy in the manner of George H.W. Bush. Under Democratic and Republican presidents, the United States fought a cold war against the Islamic Republic, waiting for the regime to start cracking from its internal contradictions. That's now actually happening, and we've heard faint praise from the administration for the Iranians who are struggling against a regime that has repeatedly shed American blood. We are witnessing the most momentous struggle for the Muslim heart and soul in the Middle East, between despotism and democracy, religious militancy and moderation, and President Obama gives the distinct impression that he'd rather have a nuclear deal with Khamenei than see the messiness that comes when autocracy gives way to representative government.

Instead of using his bully pulpit and crippling gas sanctions, which he might well be able to cajole and coerce our European allies into supporting, the president wastes energy and time in the Sisyphean task of getting the Russians and Chinese to agree to U.N. measures that won't impede the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. The president need not use the phrase "regime change," but he should know that only through "political evolution" (that sounds better) will we see Iran forgo nuclear weapons. It really ought to be obvious by now that unless Khamenei is on his knees, he's not going to stop uranium enrichment. His commitment to developing nukes is probably as strong as was Khomeini's determination to destroy Saddam Hussein in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The shock that stopped Khomeini—the realization that the conflict was threatening his regime's survival—ought to tell us what kind of shock we need now. Sanctions must complement the only thing that has so far terrified the regime: the pro-democracy Green movement.

President Obama could rightly claim that his outreach policy toward the Islamic Republic helped create the tumult that we've seen since June 12. But it's a bow that the president so far hasn't wished to take. John Limbert, the deputy assistant secretary for Iran and a former hostage, wrote a wonderful little book about his favorite country. The title, *Iran: At War with History*, captures what's been going on in Persia since Limbert spent 444 days in captivity there. President Obama likes to describe himself as a "student of history." If so, he should appreciate how far Iranians have come since 1979. They are an old and great people struggling desperately to integrate the humane political traditions of the West with their own culture and faith. The American president should lend them a helping hand. ♦

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Twilight of the Arabs

The contest for leadership in the Muslim world

By Hillel Fradkin & Lewis Libby

For nearly a century, the West has seen the Muslim world primarily through the prism of the Arab states that stretch from North Africa to the Persian Gulf. Born of decaying empires, these states still carry echoes of desert war and ancient calls to glory. Yet for more than a thousand years after the founding period of Islam, Arabs did not lead the Muslim world, or even the Middle East. For that millennium, non-Arab Muslim rulers to the east and north marked the course of these Islamic lands.

Then, the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought both the "Arab Awakening" and Western European ambitions to control Arab lands. Ottoman weakness abetted these developments. World War I ended four centuries of Ottoman rule in the Middle East, and, in the aftermath of World War II, the brief period of Western colonial dominance passed. Arab rule at last returned to Arab lands, as did Arab claims to leadership of the Muslim world.

The newly independent Arab states, all under Sunni control, wore a youthful vigor. They laid claim to being modern enterprises, suitably equipped with modern theories—principally nationalism and socialism—and practices. They called for unity, formed a league, dabbled in unions. They cheered champions of their cause—most prominently, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. Constant crises, from the nationalization of the Suez Canal through the wars surrounding the Arab-Israeli dispute and the rise of terrorism, put the Arab lands clustered around the eastern Mediterranean at the center of world attention. The Cold War rivalry and growing world demand for oil further heightened Arab importance. Arab issues rose rapidly to be of great consequence for the wider world.

But the Arab armies failed; nationalism and socialism proved false gods; and the Cold War ended. The new Arab states' vitality faded, drained away by authoritarian governments and resistance to modernity. The North Africans turned back toward Europe. The Arab countries of the eastern Mediterranean bickered, ossified, and, stifled under repression and weakened through intra-Arab and intra-Muslim wars, lost their leading role.

Although the fate of the Arab world is not written, the trends are increasingly apparent. The Arabs find themselves in the weakest position since the return of Arab rule to determine the outcome of events in the region. The decades have not been kind to the hopes once invested in the Arab world or to those who have suffered by their failures. It need not have been so, and certainly, questions remain. Of the old Sunni Arab states, only Saudi Arabia holds a plausible, if weakened, claim to a leading role in the Muslim world. Ironically, its strength draws from progress elsewhere, especially the growing energy demands of the developing states of Asia. We could wake to a Saudi Arabia that has purchased nuclear weapons, but we are less likely to wake to sudden progress in other areas. For the House of Saud reforms slowly. It may placate, but cannot summon its people; its self-indulgence is resented in Islamic lands. As a measure of its weakness—and a sign of its great imprudence—some of the Saudi elite funded a radical Islamism that would devour it.

Arab renewal stirs in Iraq. But it will take time and progress, both there and elsewhere, for a representative Iraq—dominated electorally by the Shia and Kurds—to be acknowledged by and be a model for the rest of the Arab world. Such a virtuous spiral of change might drastically reshape Arab attitudes towards both their own future and the West. But it will meet well-entrenched foes. Still, in this lies the promise of a third Arab era, of an era of long-awaited freedom and prosperity.

Even for the Arab-led Sunni radical groups like al Qaeda, the era has turned sour. Rejected by the tribes of Anbar and scattered by the powers in Riyadh, al Qaeda has suffered in the heart of the homeland it would rule. Some Arabs may rejoice in the harm al Qaeda inflicts on the West, but as a whole they do not long welcome its cruel and stultifying brand of Islam. So al Qaeda recedes into other lairs, and its leadership hides in non-Arab regions.

Today, the Muslim world feels the growing reach of

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Iran and Turkey. These two—and even perhaps Pakistan, another non-Arab state—will mark the greater Muslim world in days to come. The region is returning to older patterns, driven by the states that run from the Bosphorus to the Straits of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea. Along this line lie critical chokepoints and rich concentrations of resources in the fields of western Anatolia, the waters of Mesopotamia, and the accessible oil and gas deposits of the greater Persian Gulf. For a thousand years, non-Arab states along this line dominated the Middle East. Their heirs today hold weaker hands, but their ancient hegemony furthers their belief that they are the natural leaders of the Muslim world. The dynamics of the key states along this line—including the future interactions of Turkey, Iran, and a representative Iraq—will set the course of leadership in the Islamic world.

Only a few years ago, some in the West hoped that elections in Iran would mellow the country's leadership and that reforms would follow. But the mullahs and the Revolutionary Guard have turned to their most radical supporters to violently suppress dissent at home. In time, the regime may be toppled, but it won't be readily turned. Iran's nuclear weapons program has raced from rumor to credible reality, and it nourishes the mullahs' dreams of regional dominance. Iran's terrorist proxies prosper—Hezbollah secure in Lebanon, Hamas ruling Gaza. And Iran's open defiance of the West has only buoyed her in the keen eyes of the Muslim world. Iran can today claim preeminence. Her influence moves where once the Arabs readily held sway—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine—and threatens Arab interests in the smaller Gulf states. Even Egypt, the largest Arab state, has lately complained of Iranian interference in its affairs.

Turkey, too, seeks a greater role in the wider Muslim world. Atatürk propelled the country to be modern and to look toward Europe for its future. The Turks shunned the fez and the headscarf, and they built a modern economy and one of the largest armies in NATO. But under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development party, Turkey increasingly looks away from Europe—which has constantly rejected the Turks' desire for a path to EU membership—and back towards the Muslim world from which it arose. The age of terror has only reinforced Europeans' unease in embracing the Turks, and in the arched halls of Istanbul, nostalgia is rising for the Ottoman era. Turkey has reached out to Iran and to radical forces such as Hamas. Such acts are an expression of its new orientation and ambitions.

If there is a third Muslim state that may play a significant role in the near term it is Pakistan. Militarized from birth, overmatched by India, it drove itself unwisely into alliance with radical groups and terror and prematurely into nuclear power. Its future role in the Muslim world will be the result of factors direct and indirect: its long and strong ties to Saudi Arabia and its complicated relations with China and India.

It is fair to say that the revolution these changes entail has only just begun to be appreciated in Western thinking about the region. But even through the fog, implications emerge that may let us see the outlines.

The movement of the Muslim center of geopolitical gravity hundreds of miles east will further entangle the region in the shifting plans of Russia, China, and India. Russian interests in Turkey and Iran long preceded the Soviet era, and a reinvigorated Russia looks south with both fear and desire. The historic concerns of China and India have little to do with the Arab states, but the fate of Pakistan, neighboring Iran, and Turkey—with its cultural and historic ties to Turkic-speaking Central Asia—touch geopolitical interests much closer to home, even as rapid growth has China and India looking further outward. Russia and China have Islamic minorities who petition, too often in blood, for redress of their grievances. The violence is increasing, and internal tensions might be enflamed by cross-border influences from, for example, a radicalized Turkey or a nuclear Iran. Chinese and Russian Muslims, emerging from decades of Communist suppression, may be more drawn to Iran's and Turkey's forms of Islam than to the more repressive Wahhabi model. A competition for their Muslim allegiance has been in motion for some time. The stronger winds from the north and east are not lost on the men who struggle for leadership of the Muslim world; into the complicated swirl of the region will come new calculations—and miscalculations, as well.

The rise of the states to the east also affects an abiding issue in Arab affairs: Israel. The Arab states bordering Israel are today either long at peace with it—Egypt and Jordan—or are no longer credible near-term threats—Lebanon, Syria, and, more distant, Iraq. It is rather Iran that, though geographically far removed, lays claim to be the "frontline state" in the battle against the "Zionist entity," and acts through its proxies Hezbollah and Hamas. (Turkey, too, has recently shown bursts of hostility to Israel.) Iran's claim is ideological and religious, for it lost no land to Israel, and no Palestinian refugees burden its lands.

Yet in private the Arab states do not applaud this new champion. They see Iranian schemes as an effort to weaken rivals, to divert the West from opposing its nuclear ambitions, and to expand its claim to lead all Muslims. It is an old game. The Palestinian plight,

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which evokes great Arab anguish, has also for decades been used by Arab leaders to strengthen themselves, both internally and on the world stage. But in the Iranian version, it is also a weapon against them. Today, a serious regional war involving Israel—a great preoccupation of earlier Middle East politics—will more likely be a result of Iranian policies than of Arab wishes. In these developments may lie a means for the West to work with Arab states to separate just and realistic goals from past political ends.

Western policy will suffer an enormous setback if Turkey increases its support for Iran's agenda. For the moment, Prime Minister Erdogan sees profit in drawing upon the vitality of radicalized Islamic sensibilities. Over the centuries, Iran and Turkey have often stood at odds, and they remain intrinsically regional and religious rivals. Turkey cannot help but see in the mirror a once and future leader of the Islamic world, not a pawn of its ancient rival, and the wider region sees in Sunni Turkey a less alien land than Shiite Iran. Erdogan is a skillful man, and the Turks may have set out to play a cunning hand, slow to unfold, that allows others to overplay theirs, but a radical course can be difficult to control and there can be no guarantee that it will lay down as they plan.

While the radical rulers of Tehran seem set in their course, their tenure is not. Blood in the squares of Tehran marks the regime's weakness more than its strength. Political rule by clergy, Khomeini's innovation, was not accepted by all his clerical colleagues. Since the June election debacle, the regime has felt obliged to suppress and even arrest some of the very clerics in whose name it ostensibly rules. Iran's rulers proclaim the standard of an increasingly ill-defined "revolution" less and less credibly. The Iranian people know the private wealth that lies beneath the mullahs' public garb. They have learned the lessons of the fall of other unwanted regimes to the north: The end can come swiftly and unexpectedly.

For such reasons, Iran's radical rulers look uneasily at the tradition of quietist Islam which has been reinvigorated in Iraq. They know that its leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has a sizeable following in his Persian homeland. No surprise, then, that they disrupt Iraq's politics, race toward the nuclear goal line, and encourage terrorism. These men who beat their citizens and smuggle weapons to maim Americans are not at play. How odd it would be if we should stay those who would, in self-defense, stay the radicals' aggressive plans. More reasonable leaders in Tehran would pose a lesser threat and may be more willing, for a proper price, to turn aside from a destructive path. Delaying Iran's nuclear progress, even for a few years, may have longer term effects.

The progress of representative government in Iraq is far from certain, but it is certain that success there, however uneven, would resonate throughout the Muslim world. As Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, the assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs, recently said, a mere decade may suffice to see the rebirth of a dynamic Iraq, a "leading powerhouse in the region." Time and again, even as opportunities have been missed, a core of Iraqis has demonstrated their interest in seeing representative government succeed. We should base our future contributions on careful, forward-looking calculations, not on recriminations or regrets.

As the region changes, so have America's interests. Over the last decades, the increasing dysfunction of regional states—non-Arab as well as Arab—has drawn us ever more deeply into the region's affairs. The passing of the second Arab era will not soon relieve us of this burden, for weakness breeds history, too. But changes in the region have wrought an alteration in the underlying logic and rhythm of our engagement there. In the long Cold War and the uneasy decade that followed, the Middle East was a secondary theater in a wider, geostrategic competition. But in recent years, our presidents—liberal and conservative—have placed our interests on a different plane. They have looked uncomfortably into the maw of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In increasing the number of our troops in Afghanistan, President Obama noted that defeat might lead to Pakistani nuclear weapons falling into the hands of radicals. Such men, he reminds us, would not hesitate to use them against us.

Weapons of mass destruction are not new, but their dissemination into unaccountable hands would be. There is little wisdom in the Cold War for this new era. The masters in the Kremlin understood that we would know the source of any attack and believed that in time our economic failings would undo us. Our enemies today have a different plan and hold a different hand. They see not a cold and bitter peace, but, as events and our president recently reminded us, a freshly blooded war to which they say their God calls them. Our policy choices may be clouded, but we must weigh them and the price we are willing to pay in this stark light.

An era passes in the Muslim world; a new era stirs. Through it all, the leaders of the Muslim nations watch us. For they know there is room in their world for America. They know the failings of their own lands. America may turn from this future because it is weary or angry or, in some eyes, tainted. It may turn from the costs of policy, but not from the consequences of its turn. ♦

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A Passage to Forster

The voice for the 'sensitive' and 'plucky'

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

In the 1964 preface to the second edition of *E.M. Forster*, Lionel Trilling remarks how greatly E.M. Forster's reputation had grown from the time of his book's first edition in 1943. When Trilling initially published his book, Forster was a small-public writer, known chiefly to the cognescenti and certainly not to Uncle Willie, to use a figure Forster himself used to refer to the broader middlebrow audience that was not then, and seemed unlikely ever, to be his.

"Forster's work has become ever more widely known," Trilling wrote, "and, we may say, known in a new, a more public, way—where once it had been admired by many who found pleasure in thinking that it was known to them alone, a private experience to be kindly but cautiously shared with a few others of like mind, it has now become a general possession, securely established in the literary tradition of our time, and something like required reading for educated people." Since Trilling wrote that, of course, Forster's novels have been Masterpiece Theatred, Merchantised and Ivoried, also David Leaned (Lean's otherwise excellent movie version of *A Passage to India* is spoiled by an optimistic ending that is quite the reverse of the novel's actual ending)—greatly widening their audience still further.

What has happened to bring this about? And where does E.M. Forster's reputation stand today? Sorry to have to report that no help is forthcoming on either of these, or other central questions about the career of E.M. Forster in Frank Kermode's Clark Lectures, given in 2007 at Trinity College, Cambridge. Eighty years earlier, Forster himself used the occasion of the Clark Lectures to deliver himself of his famous book *Aspects of the Novel*. Those lectures left us with two distinctions still useful to students and practitioners of the novel: that between round and flat characters ("The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. . . . If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round") and that between story and plot ("If it is . . . a story we say 'and then?' If it is in a plot we ask 'why?'"). They are also filled with amusing surprises: Forster finds curiosity "one of the lowest of the human faculties" and humility "a quality for which I have only a limited admiration."

E.M. Forster, 1915

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Concerning E.M. Forster
by Frank Kermode
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 192 pp., $24

One will find nothing so memorable or startling in *Concerning E.M. Forster*, which is, to use a phrase of Forster's, "a ramshackly survey," a vast amount of information set out in harum-scarum unconvincing and quite forgettable form. In his own Clark Lectures, Forster notes that "a course of lectures, if it is to be more than a collection of remarks, must have an idea running through it." That idea is absent from Professor Kermode's book.

My late friend, the music critic Samuel Lipman, used to say of certain critics that they had "no fist." By having "fist" he did not mean that a critic had to be brutishly tough, a bully of authoritativeness. What he did mean is that a strong critic has to take positions, hold firm beliefs, not fear making judgments consonant with those positions and beliefs. Having fist means letting your readers know exactly where you stand. Sir Frank Kermode, former King Edward VII Chair at Cambridge, is quite without fist. As a critic, he is a summarizer, an occasional theorizer, who demonstrates more learning than penetration and is unlikely to go against the grain of the conventional wisdom and received opinions of his time, a man whose erudition beclouds his insight.

Why some critics have fist and others don't is a complex question. In Frank Kermode's case, a strong clue is available through biography. In the introduction to *Concerning E.M. Forster* he notes that choosing Forster as the subject for his Clark Lectures was "partly a matter of sentiment." Both men, Kermode and Forster, were fellows of King's College but, as Kermode reports, they achieved their

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fellowships by vastly different routes. For Forster it was a smooth ride all the way; as an undergraduate, he was elected an Apostle, a member of the inner circle of Cambridge intellectuals ostensibly devoted to truth and beauty and personal relations that included Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, and others. He was made an honorary fellow of King's in 1946 and, in an extraordinary move, was invited to reside permanently in the college, which he did until his death, at 91, in 1970.

Kermode was not an Oxbridge man, but graduated from Liverpool University in 1940 and returned there as a research student after World War II. He next taught at Newcastle University, and thence at redbrick schools in Manchester and Bristol and at the University College London, and was only offered a job at Cambridge in 1973, when he was 54. Kermode distinctly did not arrive at Cambridge through family or social connections, nor through taking controversial positions, but through the slow but careful caretaking of his career, writing for the *bien-pensant* journals, holding only approved opinions, avoiding intellectual risks. When it was suggested that *Encounter*, of which Kermode was then a coeditor, might have a CIA connection, he vacated his editorship faster than a preacher with an underage boy departing a bordello under police raid. Kermode has earned his knighthood, his fellowship, his King Edward VII Chair through always sitting, one might say, on the right side of the fence.

Perhaps none of this should surprise, given Kermode's class origins, which he sets out in glum detail in a memoir called *Not Entitled* (1995). He grew up on the Isle of Man, in a working-class family where, as he puts it, he "had no inferiors." The threats of a lower-class upbringing, he recounts, can persist throughout life, which in his case they seem to have done. He grew up "fat, plain, shortsighted, clumsy, idle, dirty . . . and very unlikely to add to the family store of sporting cups and medals, tributes to his [father's] skills in football, swimming, and, later, bowls, at which he was a champion." He early learned habits of too-great deference and appears never to have shaken free of them. On the one occasion that the fellow Kingsmen, Forster and Kermode, met, Forster corrected Kermode's pronunciation of the Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India*.

One of the most difficult things to do, said Chekhov, himself the grandson of a serf, is to squeeze the slave out of oneself. Kermode surmounted all these social obstacles—obstacles much greater in England than they might have been in America—but at a price. The price was to make him a diffident critic, never really swinging out to say what he truly thinks, which might, who knows, be genuinely interesting.

To adore his novels meant, or at least implied, that one was oneself rather a splendid person, among those people he claimed to have admired most: 'The aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky.'

No one is likely to find much of interest in Kermode's Clark Lectures on Forster. What one will find in *Concerning E.M. Forster* are odd facts, trial balloons that do not sail very high, and arguments begun but left unclinched. A lecture on Forster's interest in music, and its effect on the structure of some of his novels, peters out into pure abstraction. Kermode picks up on Forster's especial interest in death, noting that "coming to terms with death, he believed, was a necessary element in the idea of greatness." The same paragraph closes with Kermode noting, "Art is based, [Forster] said (and it may be his most important dictum), 'on an integrity in man's nature which is deeper than moral integrity.' At that lower level of integrity death is essential, and to exclude it from the creative effort is to thwart creativity and deny greatness." But this potential profundity, too, is left, like a misplaced modifier, sadly dangling.

The second half of his book, investigating Forster's life, Kermode tells us, is based on the model of Sainte-Beuve's *causeries*. But Kermode must have been reading a different Sainte-Beuve than the one I know, a critic whose essays were always pointed, sharp, leaving a clear portrait of his subject and his or her importance. Kermode's *causerie* is closer to a *schmoozerie*, in which he drops bits of gossipy information about Forster: He never got on with A.E. Housman, whom he much admired; Lytton Strachey called Forster the *taupe*, or the mole; Virginia Woolf thought he resembled "a rambling butterfly"; D.H. Lawrence once suggested to Forster that he "take a woman." (Which reminds one that Trilling wrote his book on Forster with no knowledge that the novelist was homosexual.) He adds brief cameos of Edward Garnett and Edward Carpenter or Paul Claudel (whose rightwing views, as Auden said, the world will "forgive for writing well"), all of whom influenced Forster's career. But all this has the feeling of chat at high table on a bad day.

Kermode never questions Forster's greatness, but the very thinness of his book will cause anyone who reads it to do so. Was E.M. Forster a writer of the first rank? Is his high reputation deserved? What has been behind his popularity? What, if anything, had Forster's homosexuality to do with his fiction? Forster at one point claimed he wished to write novels about homosexual men that had happy endings; he wrote one such book, *Maurice*, which was published posthumously in 1971, a soppy work that seemed to please no one. Forster's taste tended toward lower-class lovers, and his first sexual encounter, in Alexandria with an Egyptian bus driver, ended in his breaking his arm through sheer

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awkwardness. This is only worth bringing up because Forster was always stressing the importance of sexuality.

Kermode cites Lionel Trilling's mention of Forster's "refusal to be great." Trilling wrote: "He is sometimes irritating in his refusal to be great," suggesting that this was connected with Forster's suspicion of all large and powerful institutions. Implicit in Forster's manner—and, indeed, career—has always been the note of modesty. Not always easy, to affect modesty while promoting one's own career, but over a long life Forster brought this off handsomely.

Born in 1879 Forster produced his first four novels and a book of stories between 1905 and 1910. He wrote *Maurice* in 1914. He then took 10 years to write *A Passage to India*—he had lived in India, working in 1921 as private secretary to the maharajah of the state of Dewas—which most people regard as his masterpiece. After *A Passage to India* he wrote no further novels but spent his days writing intellectual journalism and giving talks over the BBC. In his early years he lived off the funds from a modest inheritance; in later years the royalties from his novels paid the way. Somehow the less he wrote, the more greatly esteemed he became. Prizes rolled in—he refused a knighthood in 1949, though he was made a Companion of Honour in 1953, and in 1969, a member of the Order of Merit.

Forster acted the part of the guru all his life. No mention is made in *Aspects of the Novel* of the element of preaching in novels, but Forster preached relentlessly in his fiction. Sometimes this preaching is by way of aperçus, some of which are quite brilliant, as when, for example, in *Howards End*, he reports of the relationship between the Schlegel sisters that "the affections are more reticent than the passions, and their expressions more subtle." But other times he will use this same method to tell his readers what to think of his character; so, of Mrs. Wilcox in the same novel, he writes:

> One knew that she worshipped the past, and the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow had descended upon her—that wisdom to which we give the clumsy name of aristocracy.

Mrs. Wilcox—very much okay. Got it. Of Mr. Wilcox, he writes:

> For there was one quality in Henry for which she [Marget Schlegel] was never prepared, however much she reminded herself of it: his obtuseness. He simply did not notice things, and there was no more to be said.

Mr. Wilcox—distinctly not okay. Clear?

King's College Chapel

One of the great differences between Forster and Henry James, whom Forster did not admire, is that James, as part of his *modus operandi*, always left final judgments of characters and of situations to his readers' moral imaginations. Forster did not trust his readers sufficiently to do so. To be sure, his novels are filled with twists and surprises. He could kill a character quicker than napalm. Another character to whom you might think him sympathetic he could treat with loathing. He did not shirk reality; idealism alone was insufficient to gain entry into Club Forster.

Forster's great theme, as Trilling pointed out, was "the theme of the undeveloped heart." He was the chronicler of those institutions—the English social-class racket, nationalism, brutish insensitivity which is to be found everywhere—that narrowed one's reaction to life, and in his fiction he was fond of sending his characters off to those places (Italy, India) where, to those susceptible, the heart was, in effect, pried open through the enlargement of experience. The largest number of undeveloped hearts per capita was to be found, for Forster, in England. Forster treated the English, V.S. Pritchett once remarked, as if they were foreigners, and far from pleasing ones. The English encountered in a Forster novel tend to be low on tolerance, cultural interest, imagination, and passion. "Only connect the prose and the passion" of life, says one of Forster's characters, and the sweet mystery of life is yours.

Anyone who has read *A Passage to India* cannot but come away secure in the feeling that the English richly deserved to lose India. Whatever one's views of British imperialism, one has also to admit that Forster, the milquetoasty blocked novelist, the long-repressed homosexual, probably contributed, through *A Passage to India*, as much as anyone short of Gandhi, to justifying before the world Indian independence. Yet one must go on to say that Forster, in the way he designed his novels, was playing with loaded dice. One cannot have appreciated him, after all, if one had oneself an undeveloped heart. To adore his novels meant, or at least implied, that one was oneself rather a splendid person, among those people he claimed to have admired most: "The aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky."

Elizabeth Bowen wrote, quite rightly, that "Forster is a novelist for the young." My own youthful admiration for him derived in good part, I now suspect, from my ardent desire to be among "the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky," whose "members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet." (There is much evidence that, in life if not in his novels, Forster was himself insensitive, inconsiderate, and schmucky. My friend Edward Shils told me that he once asked Forster if

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he might have for *Encounter* selections for a diary he kept while in Egypt. Forster said yes, of course—and promptly published the selections in *Harper's*. "Do you suppose," Edward said, "that he meant not 'only connect' but instead 'only collect?' ")

Sensitive, considerate, and plucky—that phrasing first turns up not in Forster's fiction but in an essay of 1939 called "What I Believe." What Forster believed turned out to be the general tenets of liberalism, minus the confidence in government part. *Au contraire*, government, not least his own British government, was among Forster's great enemies. It is in this essay, in fact, that he announces that "if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country," a remark of the highest dubiety. One's friend, after all, could have turned out to be a Nazi or a Soviet spy or—who knows?—someone sleeping with one's wife or lover.

In an age of faith, Forster claimed to have none, apart from his belief in that old Bloomsbury standby, personal relations. (It would be difficult, not at all incidentally, to find a group of people who betrayed one another more—sexually and in other ways—than those in the Bloomsbury Group.) Forster extends democracy two cheers (not the full three) for starting from "the assumption that the individual is important" and for allowing freedom of speech, including criticism of those in power. What Forster hated is force and violence, especially of the kind purveyed by governments. Recall the year of "What I Believe" in 1939, and Hitler has begun to sweep through Europe; a strong belief in personal relations, might we agree, was unlikely to stop Hitler. Forster also distrusts "Great Men" of the kind who tend to lead what he calls "efficiency regimes." They are, among other things, "sexless." Forster is always calling for more sex:

> I do not feel that my aristocrats [that would be our old pals, "the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky"] are a real aristocracy if they thwart their bodies, since bodies are the instruments through which we register and enjoy the world.

Forster closes by claiming that these are "reflections of an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him," though, he tells us, he remains confident that the small band of the best people could not finally be defeated.

Lionel Trilling thought that Forster was the enemy of the liberal imagination—that set of beliefs that is "sure of the order of human affairs" and holds "good is good and bad is bad," but "before the idea of good-and-evil its imagination fails." Yet I wonder if Trilling got this right. Forster could surprise from time to time by showing sympathy for characters a good liberal is supposed to despise and despising other characters a liberal is supposed to revere. But in the end Forster's chief contribution has been to that continuing project of reinforcing liberals' feelings of self-virtue owing to their lovely imaginative sensitivity and courageous distaste for social injustice. For this, above all, E.M. Forster has become known as the great writer he most distinctly isn't. ♦

B&A

Safe at Home

'A small effort which paid big dividends' in the war on terror. **BY GARY SCHMITT**

Marc Thiessen is not a lawyer, nor does he play one on TV.

However, should he ever decide to put aside his current professional life as a foreign policy hand and speechwriter, he should think about giving a career in the law a look. Based on the fact that *Courting Disaster*, his defense of the CIA terrorist detention and interrogation program, is the most detailed and comprehensive brief for that program put forward to date. And in making that brief, he also makes a compelling case that the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, Christiane Amanpour, Andrew Sullivan, Jane Mayer, and sundry others have engaged in journalistic malpractice by the selective reporting of facts, or ignoring of facts altogether, when it came to the CIA program. Many wanted to believe the worst about the CIA, the Bush White House, and the "war on terror," and wrote and editorialized accordingly.

Courting Disaster
How the CIA Kept America Safe and How Barack Obama Is Inviting the Next Attack
by Marc A. Thiessen
Regnery, 376 pp., $29.95

As detailed here, the CIA program of secret detentions and "enhanced interrogation techniques"—which included sleep deprivation, cold cells, head and belly slaps, prolonged standing, "walling," and water boarding—was a relatively small effort which paid big dividends. Out of the thousands detained by the United States and allies in the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and from around the world, some 100 were handed over to the agency, where approximately one-third were subjected to the enhanced interrogation techniques, but only three were subjected to the most extreme of those methods, waterboarding.

Yet, it was those interrogations, according to Thiessen, that resulted in the government's going from being virtually blind when it came to al

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Qaeda at the time of the 9/11 attacks to obtaining lead after lead about follow-on plots, previously unknown networks, and the operational ins and outs of al Qaeda itself. Some half of what we came to know about Osama bin Laden and his allies came directly from those grillings, with the result that *Courting Disaster* can plausibly point to the fact that, before the interrogation program was established, the United States had suffered four major al Qaeda attacks—the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the bombing of American embassies in Africa, the attack on the USS *Cole*, and 9/11—while after . . . none.

On the program's effectiveness, it was then-Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet who famously said that it "is worth more than [what] the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency put together have been able to tell us." Nor was Tenet alone in this view. As Thiessen points out, virtually everyone who has examined the program has supported that opinion. Indeed, even Dennis Blair, the Obama administration's choice to head up the U.S. intelligence community, testified to the fact that "high value information came from interrogations in which [enhanced interrogation] methods were used."

Blair followed up this point with the comment that "there is no way of knowing whether the same information could have been obtained through other means." But is that the case? As Thiessen observes, we do know that attempts to interrogate terrorists using FBI techniques both before and after the 9/11 attacks produced nowhere near the same level of information. In fact, in two cases documented in the book—one involving the interrogation of a key al Qaeda logistician, and the second, the would-be 20th hijacker in the 9/11 attack—the FBI's interrogators were at best getting dribs and drabs, and more significant intelligence was obtained only after enhanced interrogation techniques were used. This, of course, does not disprove Blair's point conclusively, but it does indicate that getting that information in an operationally timely manner through the FBI's methods, and under the strictures of the Army Field Manual (as currently mandated by the administration), is not something one might want to count on.

Thiessen's argument, however, does not rest on the program's effectiveness alone. He also wants to show that, contrary to Bush administration critics, the underlying premise of the CIA interrogation effort was not that "anything goes" or that "might makes right." To the contrary, *Courting Disaster* gives considerable space to addressing the program's legality and its morality. As he and others have pointed out, one cannot objectively read the Justice Department memos detailing what the CIA interrogators could and could not do to the high-value terrorist detainees (such as 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed) and not come away impressed with just how carefully limited the use of the harsher techniques, such as waterboarding, was. Certainly no one would want those methods to be used on oneself; but then again, as Thiessen points out, none of the terrorists who underwent enhanced interrogation have suffered the kind of permanent physical or mental damage we normally associate with torture.

To draw some moral equivalence between what CIA interrogators did, and the behavior of Japanese camp guards and the Khmer Rouge, as some commentators and some in Congress have argued, is to lose all sense of proportion. Not only were the methods radically different, so were the ends for which they were employed.

Nevertheless, there are those who would ban the use of any harsher interrogation methods no matter what the cost in public security. All one can really say to them is that they should remain as far away from government as possible, where at times moral and legal judgments are not clear-cut, but one has to take responsibility for the safety of one's fellow citizens.

The more nuanced criticism is that it is better, as a matter of law and public morality, to stay well clear of anything that smacks of torture in the normal course of events but to acknowledge that, in dire circumstances, one may ignore the law and do what is necessary—the so-called "ticking bomb" scenario.

Although there is a case to be made for this approach in theory, in practice it has two major drawbacks. First, as the CIA discovered with the planned follow-on attacks against the United States by al Qaeda, we might not learn about a "ticking bomb" until an enhanced interrogation has actually taken place. Second, it will not be a president doing the rough stuff, but it will fall on the shoulders of intelligence or military personnel to carry out his order. Good luck convincing them that it's okay to break the law when they risk losing their careers, savings (as they hire lawyers), and liberty, with their only defense being "I was told to break the law." Nor is the "ticking bomb" argument without its problem as a theory, for it implies that the law, including the Constitution, is not sufficient to protect the country—a dubious lesson for citizens and leaders alike.

There is a take-no-prisoners quality to *Courting Disaster.* Thiessen seems happy to do battle with anyone and everyone who has a negative take on the CIA program. But given the moral preening Barack Obama and his allies have engaged in when it came to the CIA program, Bush administration policies, and Guantánamo, the walloping Thiessen hands out is mostly deserved.

The truth is, Americans are not nearly as fastidious as Obama assumed they were when he released the interrogation memos last April. Polls consistently show that only one-quarter of the nation reject out of hand enhanced interrogation methods for the highest-value detainees. The majority see a need to use more coercive interrogation methods in certain select instances. This is not a case of Americans being morally obtuse, but quite the opposite: We understand perfectly well both the threat we face and the fact that men like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed are not likely to break if faced only with the interrogation techniques allowed under the Army Field Manual. They understand that innocent lives are at stake in whether the Obama administration is effectively addressing this and similar issues in the war against al Qaeda. ♦

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B&A

Fight for America

A pivotal moment in the struggle between France and England. **BY MARK TOOLEY**

The Death of General Braddock; George Washington on horseback

POODLESROCK / CORBIS

It's one of the most lushly romantic and chilling scenes in American history, if not often recalled. The British major general Edward Braddock led a scarlet-coated army that hacked its way deep into the frontier wilderness of colonial America in 1755. Expecting easily to capture the undermanned Fort Duquesne at present-day Pittsburgh, and to push France back into Canada, the Anglo-American force was, instead, ambushed by the French and their Indian allies. Braddock was killed and the army decimated, despite the best efforts of the young colonial officer George Washington, who repeatedly evaded death. America's colonial frontier was left wide open to a season of atrocities.

Braddock's March is the first book by Washington lawyer Thomas E. Crocker, and it is arguably (and surprisingly) the first truly comprehensive history devoted exclusively to the calamitous march that remade North America. Crocker argues that, without Braddock's disaster, the French might have withdrawn to Canada to negotiate peace. Absent years of the French and Indian War, events precipitating American independence likely would have been avoided. George Washington would have become a respected British Army officer and an eventual United States would have peaceably evolved into a Canada-style British dominion.

Braddock's March
How the Man Sent to Seize a Continent Changed American History
by Thomas E. Crocker
Westholme, 384 pp., $28

Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, is the author of Taking Back the United Methodist Church.

Whatever Crocker's historical conjecture, Braddock's story is superb history, involving many notables such as Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Daniel Boone. The bluff, 60-year-old Braddock was a competent veteran of the Coldstream Guards who had fought the French in Holland. The son of a general, the lifelong bachelor was socially prominent in London, where he was intimately connected to a young actress, herself the paramour of other prominent English gentlemen. The Duke of Cumberland, a son of George II and army commander, personally selected Braddock to lead what was the largest military force ever to enter the Western Hemisphere.

The year before the French had refused an appeal by the acting governor of Virginia, represented by young George Washington, to abandon their possessions south of the Great Lakes. Washington helped ignite the French and Indian War when his own force of Virginians and allied Indians encircled a French military delegation and killed the commander. (Himself later encircled and forced to surrender, Washington unknowingly signed an acknowledgment, in French, that he had "assassinated" the enemy commander.)

But Washington's mishaps did not much bother London or Williamsburg, which were both anxious to oust the French, especially Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio. Braddock's force numbered about 2,400 men, some of them colonial volunteers, and the general quickly accepted Washington onto his personal staff. Encamped at Alexandria, Virginia, in the spring of 1755, Braddock hosted a summit of the colonial governors of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts to synchronize war strategy—the first such summit in America, presaging future intra-colonial cooperation.

Evidently Braddock's army was unimpressed by Alexandria, and the small city reciprocated. One British officer recalled that dinner with a local planter, surrounded by burning candles, half-naked slaves, and humidity, resembled the "infernal regions." Braddock's host, John Carlyle, remembered that the general "took everything he wanted, abused my home, and furniture and

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made me little or no satisfaction … but to our great joy they marched from hence … with the greatest parade and negligence." Carlyle, whose house still stands regally today, also described the British as "prejudiced against us" and "used us like an enemy country … calling us the spawn of convicts, the sweepings of the gaols." Braddock personally, Carlyle called brave, but also "very indolent, slave to his passions, women and wine," adding, "See into what hands so great an affair as the settleing [sic] the boudarays [sic] in the North America was put."

Maybe Carlyle was overly harsh about his former houseguest, who was a meticulous British officer. A prominent Marylander called Braddock "austere … distant … haughty," even towards the colonial governors. Evidently the general did not waste conversation. But his sojourn across the Potomac in "indescribably lovely" Georgetown (then part of Maryland, today in Washington) was more enjoyable. Braddock had never before found "better dressed or better mannered people" than in Georgetown, where men were "very large and gallant" and women were the "most beautiful that my eyes have ever looked upon," while the "stately buildings" have "no superiors in England."

With the promise of corralling wagons and provisions in Maryland, Braddock divided his force. Half the army followed what is today, roughly, Route 7 through Virginia's Piedmont from Alexandria up to Winchester, while the other half followed what is today roughly Route 270 from Georgetown to Frederick. (Mostly unnoticed today, the submerged remains of Braddock's Rock, where his force landed after crossing the Potomac, are near the Kennedy Center, marked by a small plaque.) The impact of Braddock's army marching with flags flying and drums beating through the small villages of colonial Maryland and Virginia must have been considerable. Colonial forces wore blue jackets while the British regiments and their colonial recruits wore red. The army must have been biracial, because recruiters were discouraged from signing up blacks who were not "young and strong." Local Catholics, especially the Irish, were also avoided, since their attitude towards the French could not be trusted. British sailors were attached to the army to help transit rivers and assist with ropes and pulleys for dragging wagons and cannon. Dozens of camp followers also marched, mostly soldiers' wives who doubled as washer women. Perhaps doubting that all were "wives," Braddock had physicians "search and see who was clean."

George Washington by Charles Willson Peale, 1776

British planners in London, relying on faulty maps, thought the army could paddle up the Potomac, with the rocks of Great Falls north of Georgetown simply blown out of the way. Engineers on site quickly saw otherwise. Maps in London also showed the jump over the Alleghenies from Cumberland to Fort Duquesne as only 15 miles. In fact, it is more than 100 miles.

To his credit, Braddock did not dwell on these mishaps but was more distraught over the failed promise of wagons, provisions, and Indian allies by colonial governors. Benjamin Franklin rescued the expedition when he shrewdly frightened Pennsylvania farmers into renting their wagons to the army rather than risk seizure. Some Indians convened at Cumberland and thrilled to Braddock's display of cannon fire and martial music, responding with their own "horrible noise, dancing all night." But they mostly dispersed, never to reappear.

Historians usually fault Braddock for failing to win more Indian friends; but Crocker writes that intra-tribal rivalries mostly explain the failure, and that Braddock, while no charmer, understood the importance of such alliances against the French. The British were intrigued by the first Indians they encountered, calling them "well made" and "dexterous." One tribal princess trysted with much of Braddock's officer corps before he banned Indian women from camp. An Indian scout who remained later called Braddock, after the disaster, a "bad man" full of "pride and ignorance."

Running low on provisions while in Cumberland, Braddock nearly canceled the march. But he was relieved by "plump" Quakers from Pennsylvania laden with wagons of flour, cheese, and bacon. One officer presciently noted that cheese and bacon are the "baits that draw rats to destruction." Quakers and Benjamin Franklin notwithstanding, Braddock pronounced that his army was victimized by "lies and villainy."

Mythology teaches that Braddock arduously constructed a twelve-foot-wide road through the wilderness to accommodate his carriage. In fact, he abandoned his "chariot" in Cumberland, and for the climb into the mountains and beyond, rode a white charger. Pushing over 2,500 men and camp followers, with nearly 200 wagons, 30 cannon and mortars, and 600 pack horses across the Alleghenies, under constant threat of ambush, and where no wheeled vehicles had ever rolled before, was an engineering marvel.

Disputes among Braddock's officers

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were rife, with his own secretary secretly denouncing the general. Braddock himself was mostly aloof, while ordering frequent floggings of deserters and drunkards. He knew the 116-mile trek from Cumberland to Fort Duquesne demanded absolute discipline. A team of 300 axe men, receiving extra pay, tore through the forest and up mountains, braving bears, panthers, and rattlesnakes, punching a road where only Indian paths had existed before. Beyond Cumberland were virtually no European inhabitants, so all provisions had to be carried.

Colonial newspapers gushed with confidence: "May the Great God of Hosts Crown their Enterprize [sic] with Success." But an officer described the scene in more prosaic terms: "The knight [Braddock's quartermaster] swearing in the van, the general cursing and bullying in the center, and their whores bringing up the rear." Although Braddock appointed far-flung sentries, Indian and French raiding parties occasionally shot and scalped stragglers, including one woman, also leaving insulting graffiti on trees, including "many insolent expressions."

To reach Fort Duquesne before French reinforcements, Braddock divided his army nearly evenly between a forward flying column and a rear column to guard the baggage train, sometimes with 15 miles or more dividing the two. He also decreed that the army, as it approached the fort, would majestically ford the Monongahela River, presumably under French observation, with "bayonets fixed, colors flying, and drums and fifes beating and playing." It was a magnificent sight. Less impressively, Braddock rejected a subordinate's suggestion to beat the forests as Scottish Highland hunters drive their game, to forestall ambush.

Braddock's confidence was not misplaced. The French commander, realizing he was outnumbered, was preparing an honorable surrender. But a young captain dissuaded him, ripping off his shirt while retaining his tri-cornered hat, painting himself with war paint, and whipping the tribal allies into a frenzy with war whoops. On July 9, 1755, he led about 900 warriors, including 200 French and Quebecois, into the woods to surprise the British, now only seven miles away. The captain was quickly killed during the assault, but his audacity prevailed. The British regulars were flummoxed by gunfire from the trees. Many colonials attempted to fight from within the woods and were mistakenly shot by their British comrades. George Washington, barely recovered from debilitating diarrhea, urged Braddock to fight guerrilla-style rather than in formation.

"I've a mind to run you through the body!" General Braddock responded. "We'll sup today in Fort Duquense or else in hell."

Braddock's exertions were fearless, as he lost two horses beneath him seeking to rally the troops. But he was shot, possibly by a colonial: One Pennsylvanian later claimed that he killed Braddock in reprisal for having impaled his brother for hiding during the battle. Wagoneers such as Daniel Boone abandoned their wagons and dashed to the rear. The Indians chased the Anglo-Americans to the river, where "they shot many in ye water both men and women and dyed ye stream with their blood, scalping and cutting them in a most barbarous manner." Washington, with a few remaining officers, helped organize a retreat and carried Braddock from the field. The Indians and French remained behind, plundering, drinking, and scalping.

More than 900 Anglo-Americans, or about one-third of Braddock's total force, were killed or wounded, including 63 of 89 officers. Not a single wagoneer was hurt. At least eight women were killed. An American prisoner in the fort observed the returning French and Indians championing their war trophies and firing guns, with about a dozen naked prisoners. He later watched from the ramparts as the Indians burned them to death, poking them with hot irons, and "yelling with infernal spirits."

Carried away in a cart, General Braddock survived for several more days, aware of the disaster over which he had presided, but still dispensing orders, many of them sensible. His instruction to leave flour along the escape route for stragglers saved lives. Another order was more controversial: to transport the wounded, munitions and provisions were destroyed, worth perhaps £300,000.

"We shall know how to deal with them another time," were his last words. He left to Washington his cook, his war horse, sash, leopard skin saddle pad, and pistols. Washington buried Braddock beneath the road he had built, with the army marching over his grave to disguise it from Indians eager to mutilate the remains. The general was "brave to a fault," Washington later remembered, a man "whose good and bad qualities were intimately blended."

One British officer blamed the colonials for "continually telling the soldiers, that if they attempted to fight the Indians in a regular manner, they would certainly be defeated." But the warning was astute. Although the remaining British force still heavily outnumbered the French and Indians, it quickly retreated into "winter quarters" in Philadelphia, although it was July. The army's ignoble withdrawal left the frontier exposed, with Braddock's road now conveniently available for invaders. Fifteen hundred settlers may have been killed or captured, and regions west of the Blue Ridge were evacuated. One typically horrific raid into Virginia entailed roping colonial infants onto tree branches and shooting them for target practice. Fort Duquesne would not be captured for another three years, and the war lasted until 1763, eight years after Braddock's catastrophic Battle of the Wilderness.

In more peaceable times, Braddock's Road became the way west for thousands of settlers, eventually formalized as the National Pike. A road crew discovered Braddock's body in the early 19th century and reburied it nearby, where it is now marked by an obelisk. Britain in 1755 was horrified, but also uncomprehending, about Braddock's disaster; Horace Walpole observed, "Braddock's defeat still remains in the situation of the longest battle that ever was fought with nobody." Anglo-American ties never fully recovered from the tensions of Braddock's March, whose chief surviving hero was the young George Washington. His experience and fame would serve Americans well 20 years later. ♦

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B&A

The Boy's Alright

The perfect is the enemy of 'Mr. Good Enough.'

BY STEPHANIE GREEN

Lori Gottlieb played the waiting game and lost. For over 40 years she, like so many women, waited for her Prince Charming, that mythical figure ingrained in every little girl's head since seeing Snow White carried off on horseback. But he never arrived. It's not that she was not attractive, smart, accomplished, or that she did not look hard enough. It's because he never existed.

Reality bites, which is what Gottlieb is trying to teach her fellow loveless lasses in *Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough*. Did she say "settling"? Is that not the word the modern woman has been taught to liken to sacrilege? Yes, and she's also ripping the wings off Mr. Right, another figure of propaganda that has been torturing Gen X women.

A journalist whose work has appeared in numerous publications, Gottlieb wrote a piece in the *Atlantic* in 2008 prodding women to stop wasting time daydreaming about Mr. Right and broaden their minds with a Mr. Real. "I had the classic Cinderella complex," she writes. "It never occurred to me to trade those impractical glass slippers for shoes I could actually wear." Gottlieb takes the reader through her various methods for finding a man: speed dating, matchmaker consultations, online dating, blind dates, and conversations with colleagues and friends to demonstrate how she and her peers set the bar way too high, with "settling" being the ultimate fear.

> The more I spoke to people about relationships—younger single women, older single women, married women, single men, married men, and women from my mother's generation—the more I found myself asking the same questions: How did the search for love get so confusing and was this modern way of dating making women happy?

Stephanie Green is a writer in Washington.

Marry Him
The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough
by Lori Gottlieb
Dutton, 336 pp., $25.95

Jake Pavelka, 'The Bachelor'

Gottlieb also dedicates a good portion of her brief to the causes of this I'd-rather-be-single-than-settle mentality.

She makes the case that, to some extent, feminism has taught women to reach for the stars in every aspect of their lives: Go to the best school you can, get the highest degree you can, get the best job you can, make the most money you can, get the smartest address you can, get the best man you can. This has, of course, caused women to postpone marriage while bypassing scores of eligible men simply because they don't quite measure up. According to the 2003 census, a quarter of women between the ages of 30 and 34 have never been married, a statistic four times higher than in 1970. "The goal was to go out and become self-actualized before marriage. I didn't imagine that one day I'd be self-actualized but regretful," she says.

In addition to the women's movement, Gottlieb puts blame at the doorstep of popular culture. "Read any article on dating in women's magazines or check advice books marketed to single women, and you'll read things like 'you deserve to be with a man who pays. You deserve a man who always puts you first. You deserve to be with a man who rubs your feet at night.' And of course the man in question will also be tall, dark, and handsome."

In 1995 Ellen Fein published a dating manual entitled *The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right.* (There's that pesky term again.) Among the tenets of *The Rules* were that women should play hard to get, feign indifference, and let the man do the pursuing. Although some may find this strategy effective, its underlying principle is that, after all, you deserve to be chased, you are a creature unlike any other, you are a *Rules* girl and deserve only the best. But this is also the mindset Gottlieb argues has gotten women in the self-confident-but-lonely-princess predicament. One of the more interesting of her case studies, which she labels "the tap water incident," involves a woman who dismissed a possible suitor because he preferred tap water to bottled water at dinner: "He ordered tap water. He took the subway to meet me. He didn't even take a cab at night. He's cheap," the woman lamented.

And another love affair bites the dust.

"If you require that someone fulfill your perfect picture," Gottlieb quotes a psychologist, "you're in for a long-term relationship with your fantasies." ♦

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Bill and Melinda Gates at Davos, 2010

B&A

Animal Dispirits

A doctor with the wrong prescription for capitalism.

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT MALLOCH

Three weeks ago, high in the wintry alpine resort of Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, the world's elite convened under the auspices of the World Economic Forum. Everyone sipped schnapps and talked about the future of the globe under the banner, "Rethink, redesign, rebuild." And the book they all were reading was this one, written by an editor of the *Economist* and his researcher.

The Road from Ruin
How to Revive Capitalism and Put America Back on Top
by Matthew Bishop and Michael Green
Crown Business, 384 pp., $27

The operative word in the title is "from," and the twin goals of this overly ambitious work are to "revive capitalism and put America back on top"—large goals indeed. According to Bishop/Green, capitalism ended on September 15, 2008, when Lehman Brothers fell. It is now a question of what will replace it. Showing off their blame-game proficiency, Bishop/Green enlist *Time*'s list of 25 people they love to hate, with Richard Fuld, Lehman's last CEO, rated number one. The thesis here is that we can learn from the booms, crashes, and bubbles of the past; there were four big mistakes; Henry Paulson is a rogue; the problems are bankers, speculators, regulators, and politicians.

This book is cynical and trite, and the best thing to be said for it is that Bishop/Green do *not* believe the answer is more Marx. But they come close when they claim that the financial system is a "giant Ponzi scheme." There are the five lessons of history and the four road signs ahead that, yes, will lead us to "a better kind of capitalism." Davos phrases abound: Rethink economics, redesign governance, put values back in business, promote financial literacy. Full of suggestions, most of them half-baked, Bishop/Green suggest that the most pressing challenge is for the dollar to "relinquish its role as the world's reserve currency." Greed, we are told, is not good. And since easy populism would be a mistake, Bishop/Green show us the three roads ahead: *Denial*—where we do nothing; *government control*; and their preferred route, *from ruin to new prosperity*.

Here is a sample insight: "At times of panic credit markets have a tendency to freeze." Here is another: "The bubble forms when expectations exceed reality." Cue the applause from the civics class. Pondering the Goldman Sachs scandal, Bishop/Green defend the too-big-to-fail argument: Their hope is that we can "find ways to deter financial institutions from taking on excessive risks." Excessive risks, sure; but *all* risks? They applaud the public rescue of banking and government-inspired guarantees (bailouts), and their mantras are "print more money" and, when in doubt, "strengthen regulatory measures." We also need much more "coordination" to defeat systemic risk. Did Keynes really get it right? Is Big Government good government? Do markets *always* fail when left to their own devices?

Taking on the dismal science of economics, Bishop/Green plead for a "new paradigm." The "animal spirits" of the market are not good and must be tamed. Citing Alan Greenspan's mistakes ("he should have known better"), they rely on the authority of George Soros. Stakeholder capitalism enters left stage; behavioral economics is less arrogant. With improved statistics, and Nicolas Sarkozy's new Commission on Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, we can modernize accounting and have a perfect global solution—a super-International Monetary Fund. Besides dumping the dollar, the world must also have "international consensus" since the United States has been naughty and "learning to share power

Theodore Roosevelt Malloch is the author of Thrift: Rebirth of a Forgotten Virtue.

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and give up control can be difficult."

In the new Bishop/Green economy, an all-powerful Global Central Bank will run money, ignoring notions of national interest; but like gun ownership, the spread of capital will also need to be controlled. Aid is critical, since poverty remains in the world—but only "aid that works." Foreign aid doesn't work, it is here acknowledged, but we need more anyway. The problem is a lack of "collective action." The authors' notion of "philanthrocapitalism," based on shareholder democracy and the overthrow of boards (especially the bad ones), will end cronyism, overcompensation of hungry CEOs, and lousy governance. And it will finally give us corporate social responsibility—Bill Gates's version of "creative capitalism"—where we all "give back" and invest entirely on a social basis. To hell with profit. All we need is the political will, since "ultimately the public is to blame." Why? Because it is financially illiterate. Journalists should be reeducated and made more "skeptical."

For in the end, money is the great taboo; it's what leads to subprime lending. Realizing that money is the "root of all evil," a "competent economic citizenry" will fight the inherent flaws of capitalism because "the people were angry and scared." If we don't fight capitalism, we are warned, we could end up with a Chinese-style authoritarian capitalism. We can't do "business as usual" any longer, and most certainly America, who started all this money madness, cannot dictate since the United States is no longer a "hegemon."

It's interesting to note that, through all the sermonizing and flagellation, short shrift is given to the classical virtues and to thrift. Instead, the underlying credo here is the need for more confidence in global government, since finance is an imperfect tool for managing risk in an uncertain world. But the market is up since September 2008; TARP funds are nearly repaid; financial reforms are on the way, and so are the Wall Street bonuses, as large as ever. Maybe we're not on the road to ruin? Maybe we will adapt and muddle through? ♦

B&A

Hooray for Bollywood

Just when the drama is most intense—go into your dance. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

In just seven weeks, the most popular movie ever made in the country that makes more movies than any other has grossed nearly $7 million in American theaters. It's called *3 Idiots*, and its box-office numbers in the United States have placed it among the most profitable foreign film releases in history—this despite the fact that it has barely been advertised and has only been shown in 156 theaters. And chances are, had you not begun this article, you would never have learned of its existence.

3 Idiots
Directed by Rajkumar Hirani

3 Idiots—the title is in English, though the movie is almost entirely in Hindi—was produced in Mumbai, home to the planet's most relentless moviemaking industry, known familiarly as "Bollywood." To give you a sense of how relentless it is, consider that more than a thousand films were made in Bollywood in 2002, as opposed to some 600 films in the United States; Bollywood fare sold 3.6 billion tickets that year, compared with 2.6 billion for American features.

We don't talk about Bollywood in the same terms we talk about Hollywood because its productivity hasn't translated into global reach (although I'm told Indian movies are very popular in parts of the Middle East and in Russia). Bollywood does sell more tickets worldwide, but that is a result of the colossal domestic market within India (population 1.1 billion).

Hollywood fare earns nearly 50 times more: The total Bollywood gross for all film-related products was $1.3 billion in 2002, compared with an astounding $51 billion for American movies. That, too, is also a result of the domestic market in India, where the nominal per capita income is still only a little more than $1,000 per year and ticket prices are set accordingly. Indeed, the most financially successful movie ever made in the Hindi language is not *3 Idiots*, with its worldwide gross of $69 million, but *Slumdog Millionaire*, last year's Oscar winner, directed by the British filmmaker Danny Boyle and released by Warner Bros., which has taken in an estimated $375 million.

The interesting question is why Bollywood is not the worldwide cultural force it could be. And the answer lies in the fascinating peculiarity of its wares, which are much on display in *3 Idiots*. Bollywood movies are governed by a series of strict conventions that make very little sense if you haven't been raised on a diet of them. The most notable convention is that no matter what the film, no matter the genre, no matter the circumstances transpiring in the plot, there will, every 30 minutes or so, be a huge production number. Even a horror movie will take a break from the tension it's trying to build for a song and dance. And because these are Indian popular songs, with the ululating monotonic vibrato that derives from the tradition called carnatic music, they have tended to assault rather than soothe the non-subcontinental ear.

The shifts in tone that this convention forces on any movie (save an out-and-out musical) wreak havoc on a director's ability to sustain a dramatic or comedic arc. So the Bollywood movies I've seen don't even try for thematic consistency in the way most others do; instead, they luxuriate in their

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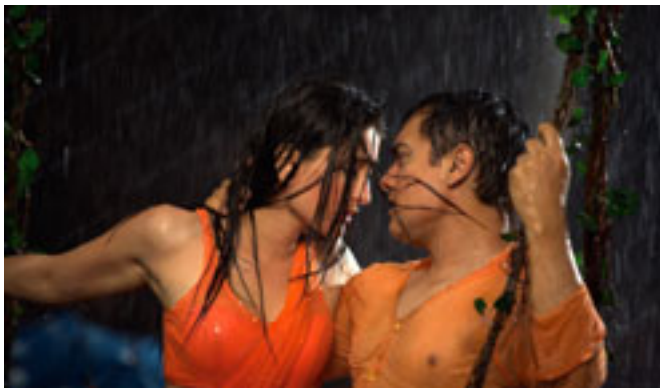
bizarre tone shifts and hop hyperactively from farce to melodrama to tearjerker in the space of a few moments. They're like daytime soap operas played at 78 rpm; if you don't like the emotion on display, just wait a second and there will be a different one.

3 Idiots is about three roommates at a prestigious engineering college in Mumbai—a school to which, the movie says, 300,000 people apply for 300 slots every year—and what happens to them in the course of their education. The ostensible subject of the movie is the intolerable pressure to achieve at India's elite institutions and how it threatens genuine education, innovation, and individuality.

It's a terrific subject for a movie, and it's bright and sunny, and it has a very winning leading performance from India's biggest star, Aamir Khan. His character is a brilliant nonconformist named Rancho, who enrages and frustrates the establishment with his singular ways but cannot be controlled because he is the school's best student. The movie begins 10 years later, as three of his classmates and the woman who loves him try to find Rancho, who disappeared upon graduation and has not been heard from since.

There are suicide attempts, family crises, dark secrets, a hidden identity, stolen exams, sadistic teachers, monstrous fellow students. Interspersed among these high dramas are comedy bits so cheesy and corny that they wouldn't have passed muster on *Saved by the Bell*, complete with a musical score with horns that go "wah-wah-wah-waaaaaah" every time something embarrassing happens.



And then there are those production numbers. The catchiest is also the most disruptive. It comes as Rancho and his lady love are about to embrace (there is almost no kissing in a Bollywood movie, owing to a long tradition of industry censorship that puts the record of Hollywood's old Hays Office to shame). Instead, they burst into a peppy pop number during which they fly around a soundstage on strings, shaking their crania like bobbleheads and singing the nonsense words "Zoobi doobi zoobi doobi param pum." (You can catch it on YouTube: Just type "zoobi doobi" in the search window.) It may be the least sensual love scene in movie history.

Still, it's hard not to like *3 Idiots*, ludicrous beyond belief though it is, and to appreciate the reason for its enormous success both in India and here. *3 Idiots* is a classic example of a social drama that tries to have its cake and eat it too by simultaneously celebrating India's culture of achievement and creation of a thriving middle class and calling the lives and values of the strivers into question. It's a perfect reflection of a nation in the throes of an evolutionary change created by new wealth, told in the conservative manner of the popular culture that is being supplanted by the sophistication and worldliness toward which the movie itself expresses such ambivalence. But who cares about such nonsense! Time to sing! *Zoobi doobi param pum. . . .* ♦

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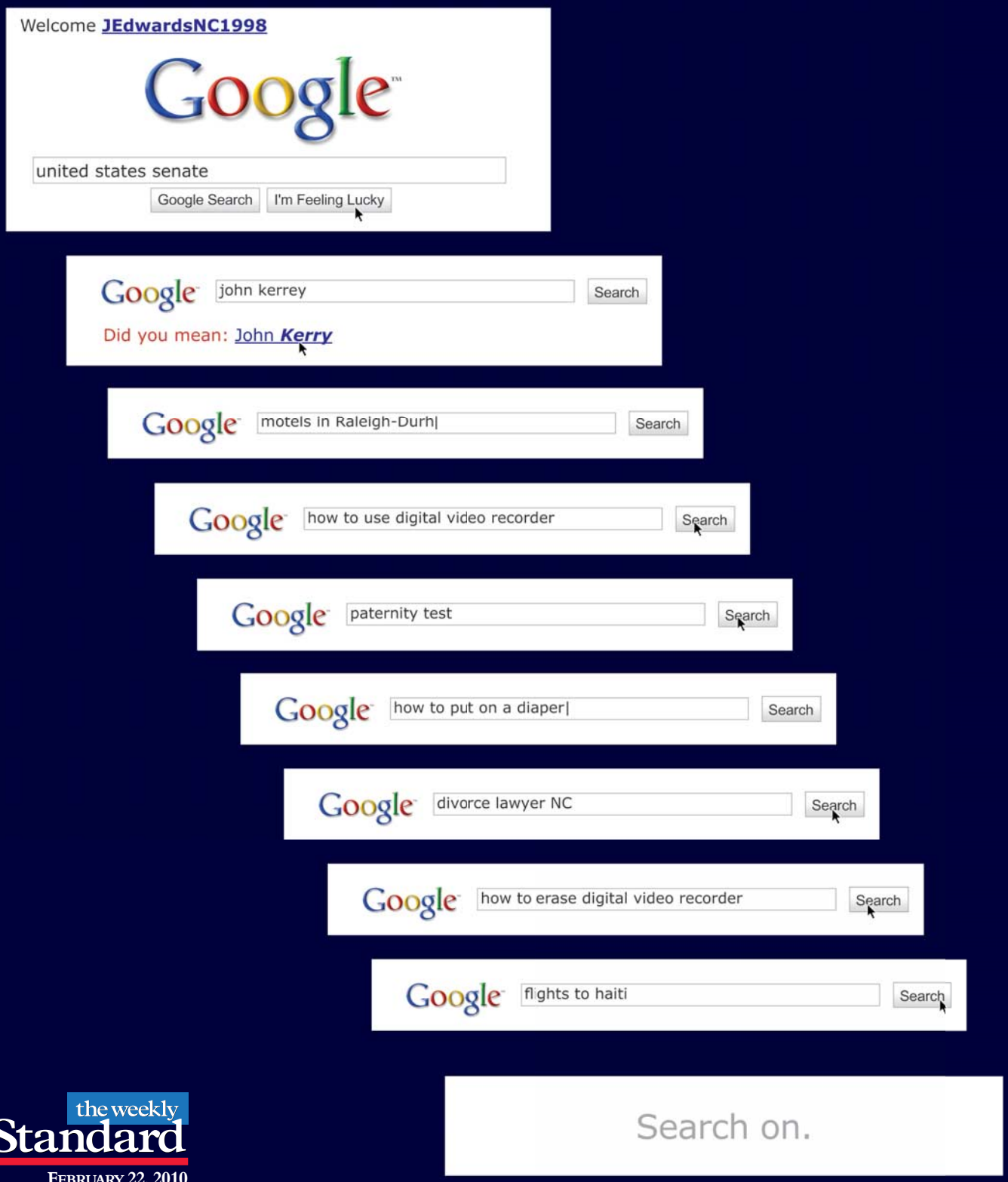
"The 60-second spot called 'Parisian Love' aired during the third quarter of Sunday's game. The commercial featured several queries being typed into Google's search field, beginning with 'study abroad paris france' to 'translate tu es très mignon' and ending with 'how to assemble a crib.' The ad closed with the message: 'Search on.'"

—CNNMoney.com, *February 8, 2010*



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